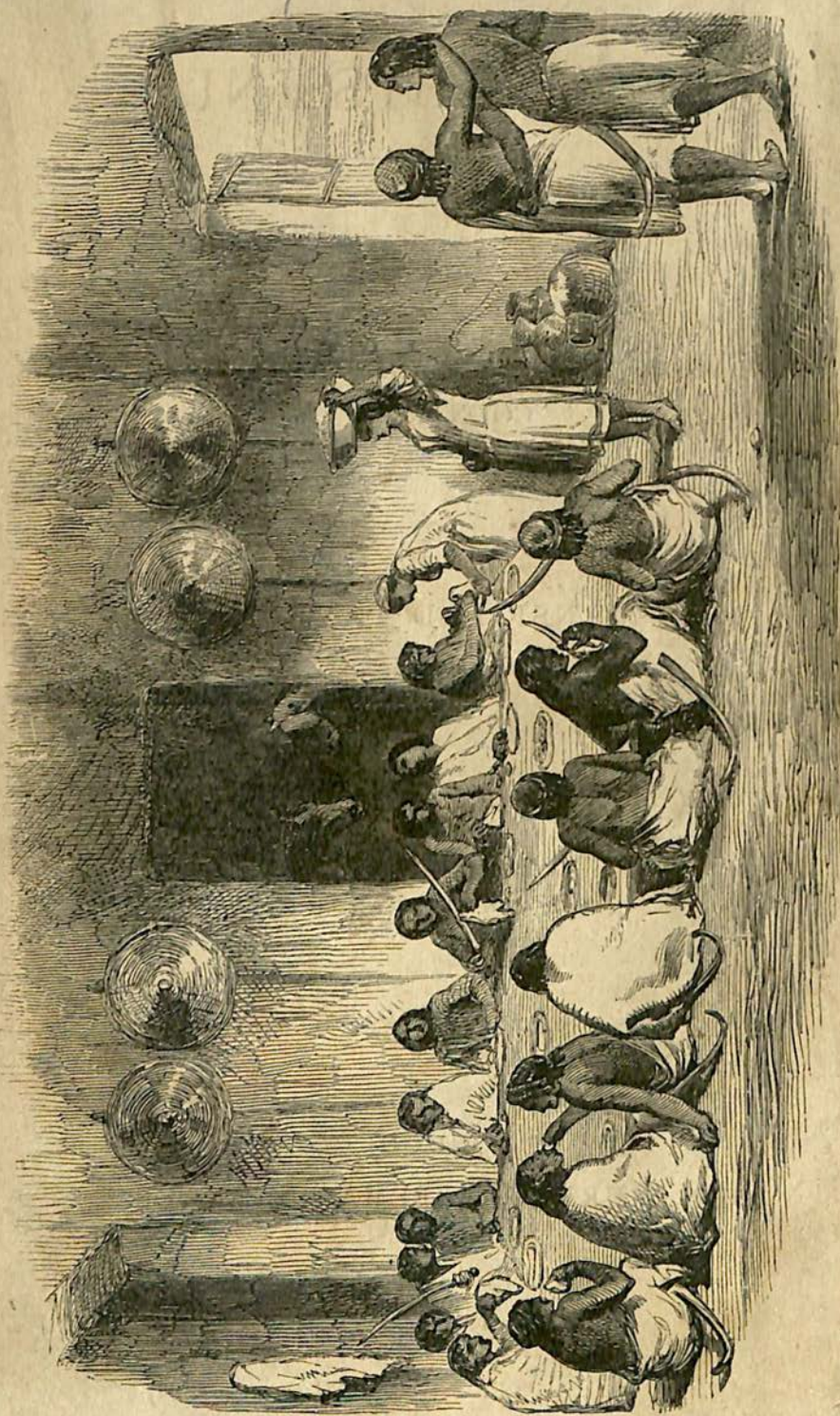




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LIFE IN ABYSSINIA:

BEING NOTES COLLECTED DURING

THREE YEARS' RESIDENCE AND TRAVELS IN THAT
COUNTRY.

BY MANSFIELD PARKYNS

SECOND EDITION, WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION.

MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1868.

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P R E F A C E.

HOPING in this edition to give the British reader a tolerably accurate idea of Abyssinia and the Abyssinians, I have omitted such portions of the former one as did not directly bear on the subject, adding in the Introduction a sketch of the political changes which have occurred since I left the country. In other respects, I have adhered to the text as it was originally written.

In proper names and native words, I have endeavoured to follow the recommendation of the Royal Geographical Society, by using the Continental rather than the English pronunciation of the vowels. The gutturals, which I express by *kh* and *gh* are—the former like the German *ich*, the latter something like the French “*accent gras*” pronunciation of *r*. I cannot explain them better to one not acquainted with Oriental languages.

February, 1868.

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INTRODUCTION.

A ROUGH sketch of the natural features and political history of Abyssinia might perhaps be interesting at the present moment. Christian Abyssinia may be considered as divided into Northern and Southern—the latter being the kingdom of Shoa, the former the part to which this volume refers and to which the expedition is going. Northern Abyssinia is, strictly speaking, an inland country; the greater portion of it part of an immense table-land, in many places mountainous, but with mountains springing as it were from the top of one large flat-topped mountain. Adoua and Axum, the modern and ancient capitals of Tigrè, seem to stand on a plain, with hills rising from it, yet their heights above the level of the sea are over 6000 and 7000 feet respectively. Gondár, capital of the Amhàra country, stands somewhat higher than Axum, and the lake Tzana (or Dembea) is at about the same altitude as Adoua.

This elevated table is intersected by deep valleys, some like rents in the ground, with almost perpendicular rocky sides; others the work of the torrents which for ages have torn through them. The river Mareb in Tigrè, and the Taccazy which forms the boundary between that country and Amhàra, are the chief valleys in Northern Abyssinia. The mountains of Simyen spring from the west bank of the latter, their highest peak rising 15,000 feet above the level of the sea and about 12,000 from the nearer portions of the river-bed. Patches of snow or hail lie on its summit during the greater part if not the whole of the year.

The general plateau drops, from its eastern edge, several thousand feet to the narrow strip of low land lying between it and the Red Sea, on the north toward the wide basin of the Nile, on the west and south to that of the Abai, or Blue Nile. It will readily be understood that, with such variety of altitude, a country lying between 10 and 15 degrees of

north latitude must enjoy almost every variety of climate. The fir, thorn, and blackberry abound on the mountains of Simyen and Woggera, and on the high plains of Gojam to the south. Fleas, too, are plentiful in the first-named district. The middle range would grow almost every kind of European fruit or grain. In the few places where the vine is cultivated it thrives luxuriantly. Wild olives, oranges, lemons, and various kinds of stone fruit, are frequent. In the neighbourhood of lake Tzana rice and the sugar-cane now grow wild, possibly having been cultivated there in former times. Indigo has been tried with success; cotton of very fine quality is grown in many parts; a large quantity of coffee is exported from the neighbouring Galla countries to the various ports of the Red Sea, whence, no doubt, a considerable portion of it finds its way to Europe as "real Mocha." In the more temperate altitudes the mimosa, jessamine, and Cape plants bloom in profusion, while the monkey-bread-tree, tamarind, bamboo, and various orchidaceous plants luxuriate in the hothouse climate of the lower valleys. It is the same in point of salubrity. An equable though warm temperature, with fine air, makes the middle and higher districts as healthy as need be, while at certain seasons of the year nothing could be more deadly than the lowest ones. The unhealthy season is, obviously, after the rains, which fall in the highlands between June and September, and on the seaboard about two months earlier. Tropical rain is not like our April showers; in one hour as much will fall as in three of an English thunder-storm. The earth cannot absorb it fast enough; in a few minutes the tiny rippling stream becomes a torrent, tearing down the mountain side, carrying with it its quota of what has made and makes Egypt. Scores of such torrents fall simultaneously into their carrier on the table-land. I have crossed the Assam, near Adoua, in the morning when it was barely deep enough to wet the soles of my feet, and gone to see it in the afternoon when it was roaring down, many feet deep, and carrying away cattle, haystacks, and remains of huts, which it had destroyed at some higher part of its course where it had overflowed its

banks. These secondary streams in their turn rush into the main valleys, each of which thus collects the watershed of a very large tract of country. In many places the Mareb and Taccazy are, in the dry season, merely rivulets, scarcely trickling between wide belts of sand, bordered by thick jungle. When the sudden supply of water reaches them they overflow both, in a broad red flood. The rains ending, they as rapidly return to their former bounds, and a rank vegetation springs up in the hot stream from the decaying remains of last year's growth. The same thing occurs, even without the inundation, in the northern and western plains of the lower levels, and nothing can be more rapidly fatal than this poisonous malaria from fermenting vegetable matter. It is to be hoped that our troops will not have much to do with such places in such seasons. A few nights would send one-half the force to hospital, and then on the skill of English doctors would depend how many recovered from a disease which, under native treatment, is nearly always mortal.

As I have said, Northern Abyssinia may be considered as divided by the river Taccazy into two countries—Tigrè and Amhàra; though, strictly speaking, these are only the names of two of the many provinces into which both countries are divided. But the people east of the river differ in language, and to a considerable extent in dress, manners, and customs, from those west of it; the former speaking Tigrè, which nearly resembles the ancient Ethiopic or Giz—the latter Amhàric, which is either a very much corrupted dialect of Ethiopic, or a distinct language with a good many words introduced from it. The whole country having in late times been ruled by Amhàras, theirs has become the official and written language; it is spoken also in Shoa, or Southern Abyssinia. There are races of Agows both in Tigrè and Amhàra, whose languages are distinct from either and from each other.

Northern Abyssinia is bounded on the north and west by Sennár and Nubia, now united into the Egyptian Pashalik of Soudan, and by sundry semi-independent races. On the south and south-east by various Galla tribes, who separate it

from Shoa and from part of the Red Sea. The strip of land between the north-east frontier and the sea towards Massàwa, Annesley Bay, &c., and the mountain slopes descending to it, are occupied by Habhabs, Bedouins, Shohos, Taltals, and other pastoral tribes. These are for the most part Mohammedans, virtually independent, both of the Abyssinians and of the Turks to whom the island of Massàwa belongs; a questionable sort of independence, owing chiefly, I imagine, to neither Turk nor Abyssinian caring to encroach on the debateable land between them. Travellers and the expedition will have most to do with the Shohos, who occupy the principal passes and act as guides. They are a tolerably trustworthy and very inoffensive race of herdsmen. To those who are curious in the matter, some details of the history of Abyssinia to Bruce's time, may be found in his Travels, continued to my time, in my former edition. I shall limit myself here to such a sketch as may in a few words give the reader a rough notion of who *Theodore* is, and of how dynasties fall and rise in his country. There is, I believe, some sort of foundation for the tradition that Maqueda, Queen of Sheba, returning from her visit to Solomon, brought with her a son by him named Menelek, from whom descended the Emperors of Abyssinia. Be this as it may, these Emperors ruled despotically till the early part of the present century, and bore as their device a lion holding a cross, and for their motto: "The lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed." About that date their power ended. Yasqus, son of Yohannes, unable to check the perpetual incursions of the warlike Wollo Gallas, allied himself with them by marrying one of their princesses. From this marriage, which was distasteful to the majority of his Christian subjects, was born the Emperor Joas, a very weak man and so strongly attached to the race of his Mohammedan mother, that he not only surrounded himself with Galla favourites, but made their language the language of the Court. His subjects revolting, he called to his aid the well-known Ras Michael Suhul, Governor of Tigrè, who first subdued the rebels and then set about to get rid of the Gallas who had been the cause of the rebellion.

Joas soon found that, as has often occurred in other countries, the man he had called in to assist him, became in all but name, his master. Hoping to get rid of him, he secretly instigated the Galla tribes to rebel, ostensibly against himself, really against his minister. Michael defeated them, and finding among the prisoners many of the Emperor's personal friends and servants, on their confession of their master's treachery, he put him to death. From that time the title of Ras, or Prime Minister, has been that of the real ruler of the country, neither Michael nor any of his successors having assumed that of *Negous*, or *Hàtzé*, from the popular feeling that no one, except of the line of Solomon, could be styled *Emperor*. There has always been a titular *Negous*. In my time he was wretchedly poor, and earned a livelihood by making reed parasols for sale ; still the de facto Sovereign, Ras Ali, paid him every outward mark of deference, standing or sitting on the ground in his presence. This Ras Ali was grandson of Ras Gouxa, a Galla chief, who obtained the dignity by arms, and in whose family it had remained, with the government of Amhàra, since the overthrow of Ras Michael. The government of Tigrè, however, changed hands several times in that short period. When Ras Michael obtained his liberty, after his defeat by the Gallas, he had great difficulty in regaining his own country, Tigrè, from Dejatch Kefla Yessous, whom he had left there as Viceroy, and who, on his master's reverse, usurped the kingdom and set him at defiance. He conquered him, however, and put him to death in the most barbarous manner. Michael was succeeded by his son Weldo Gabriel, who was killed in battle, after a short reign. Then Welda Selassy, chief of Antàlo, son of the usurper Kefla Yessous, obtained the throne, and after a long reign was succeeded by his son, Weldo Rafael, a minor. The Regent, Dejatch Gabro Michael of Temben, quarrelling with his ward, because the young prince allowed the rebel Dejatch Sabagardis of Agami to escape from prison, threw off his allegiance and declared himself ruler of Tigrè. Sabagardis, always in rebellion, after many defeats, at last overcame, and with his own hand

speared Gabro Michael whom he found wounded by a musket-ball. So Sabagardis ruled over the land. His son-in-law, Dejatch Oubi of Simyen on the Amhàra side of the Taccazy, sometimes fought with him against the then Ras Marié ; sometimes with the Ras, against his father-in-law. In the latter combination, at the battle fought December, 1830, at Mai Islamai, on the Taccazy, Sabagardis was utterly routed, taken prisoner, and murdered in cold blood, it is said by Oubi's own hand. That was a terrible day : the bones of the fugitive Tigrèans, mercilessly slaughtered by the savage Galla horsemen, were visible as far as two or three days' march from the battle-field, when I passed that way fifteen years later. Sabagardis' memory is still revered by the Tigrè people, as the best of their kings and bravest of their warriors. One Aito Baraky disputed the succession with Weld Inchael, son of the late king, and invited Oubi to assist him. Oubi did so successfully, and then took possession of the country for himself. Weld Inchael and his brother Carsai again rose, were again defeated, submitted, and, promising fealty, received the government of certain large provinces from their victorious brother-in-law. The elder was killed in a petty disturbance ; the younger, Carsai, marrying Oubi's daughter, became his son-in-law as well as brother-in-law, but, for all this double bond, could not remain quiet. Again rising in rebellion, he was again beaten and fled to his mountain-fort, whence Oubi, unable to draw him by force, decoyed him by a solemn oath, promising him safety and liberty—received him kindly, and then threw him into prison. He escaped, but was retaken, and was still in bonds when I left the country. *Possibly* he may be the Dejatch Cassai or Carsai, now spoken of as taking part against Theodore. So, in my time, Ras Ali ruled the country west of the Taccazy, except the provinces of Simyen, Walkait, Waldabba, &c., which belonged by inheritance to Dejatch Oubi, who also by right of conquest reigned over Tigrè, east of that river ; and, though at times paying the Ras a sort of peppercorn acknowledgment, was virtually independent of, and often at war with him. It

must be understood, however, that the whole country was always more or less in a chronic state of war. If the two ruling princes were not at war with each other, they were either fighting their neighbours or quelling rebellion among their own subjects; and, beside these greater matters, the prevailing feudal system led to constant minor affairs between the semi-independent chieftains of various degrees. Both Tigrè and Amhàra were divided among a few great chiefs, most of whom bore the title of Dejasmach, second only to that of Ras. These large provinces were subdivided into counties, held by inferior chieftains, under the great *tenants in capite*, and these again into parishes ruled by sub-chiefs.

So matters remained till two or three years after I left the country, when there appeared on the stage, at first in a very minor part, one Cassai or Carsai, no connexion with him of the same name I have before mentioned. He was born in Kuàra, one of the westernmost provinces of Northern Abyssinia, and was son of a man of no eminence or wealth, though claiming lineal descent from the imperial line of Solomon. After his father's death, our hero's widowed mother gained her livelihood by collecting and selling *Koussou*, the native remedy for the national tape-worm, while he picked up his on the roads as a brigand. After the many ups and downs of such a life,—at times leader of a band of sixty or eighty men, at other times hiding alone,—he acquired such celebrity that a large body of men joined him. From brigand he turned rebel, and beat the troops which the Empress Menin, Ras Ali's mother, sent against him. To settle matters pleasantly, Ali's daughter was given him to wife: this, however, made very little difference. The same play that has been so often acted in Abyssinia was again acted. The story of alliances by marriage, of after wars, of false truces, broken engagements, and victors running away from the vanquished, would, with mere alteration of names and dates, apply to one hero as well as to another. .

In 1851 Menin attacked him, leading her troops in person, and at first beat him; but her chiefs, not sharing their mistress's courage, fought it out so badly that victory's tide and

her army's tails turned, and left her a prisoner. Ras Ali, not daring to fight him, agreed that he should hold the provinces he had conquered, as fiefs under the Crown, with the title of Dejatch Carsai. He gave the Empress her liberty; but two years after Ali proclaimed him a rebel, and appointed another man to his government. Carsai resisted, and a great battle was fought in the province of Dembea, where Ali, completely beaten, sought safety in flight; and thus ended the Galla dynasty, which had been supreme in Western Abyssinia since the days of Ras Gouxa. Carsai next conquered the semi-independent province of Gojam, taking its chief, Birrou Gosho, prisoner, and then marched against my old friend Oubi, who received him in his native mountains of Simyen. Oubi fought well; but, old and weak, was obliged to rest awhile in a hollow near the battle-field, where, disagreeably surprised by a party of Carsai's troops, he was taken prisoner and carried off in triumph to the camp; on which, his army losing heart, a general panic ensued. Thus the whole of Tigrè, or East Northern Abyssinia, fell into the conqueror's hands, besides Simyen and Oubi's other provinces west of the Taccazy, with his mountain-forts and treasures. In short, with his former conquests, Carsai had gained by this victory the whole of Northern Abyssinia.

On the 5th of February, 1855, he was crowned *Theodoros*, King of Kings, Emperor of Ethiopia, by the Aboun or Coptic Bishop of Abyssinia. I have seen it stated that he assumed this name from a pious feeling that *God had given* him the victory. From other stories I have heard of him, such feeling would be quite consistent with his character; but it is odd that no recent traveller seems to have heard the old traditional prophecy I often heard, long before Carsai was dreamed of—viz., that a man named Theodore should reunite the old empire and restore its glories. For obvious reasons, Carsai wished to be, in the minds of his ignorant and superstitious subjects, the Godsent Theodore; and indeed he partly fulfilled the prophecy, for in turn he conquered the Galla tribes to the south and the kingdom of Shoa. Possibly, he might have done a great deal towards

the other part ; for undoubtedly he is a man of extraordinary energy and talent for an Abyssinian. Nothing can better evince his moral courage than the way in which he "took the bull by the horns," in the usually difficult matter of destroying a long-existing feudal system. Instead of currying favour with the great chiefs, as almost any other adventurer would have done, he took them and put them in prison ; politely telling them that he had no intention to inconvenience them, but merely to keep them safe till his government was firmly established. In their stead he appointed, from his own proved followers, military commanders over the troops in the various provinces, with fixed rank, and paying them from time to time as a commencement of regular pay. The troops, too, received pay and were forced to purchase their supplies from the peasantry instead of plundering them. He introduced some sort of discipline into his army, which he proposed to arm entirely with muskets. He contemplated disarming the peasantry ; did away with the barbarous system of handing homicides over to the tender mercies of the family of the slain, substituting public execution ; relieved the country from many vexatious imposts ; abolished the slave-trade ; and even set the example in his own person and court of decency in manners and conversation, and of wearing something like civilised garments in lieu of the fashionable semi-nudity. Such reforms originated by an Abyssinian would seem marvellous, if not impossible, to any one who knew Abyssinian ignorance and obstinacy. I have them on the authority of my poor friend Walter Plowden, then Consul for Abyssinia. I firmly believe his statements ; but I know how bright men appear by contrast, and how enthusiastic we are apt to be about a hero. Theodore is described as of striking appearance ; of great energy, both mental and physical ; of indomitable courage, moral and personal ; remarkably agreeable and polite when in good humour ; untiring in business ; thoroughly independent of advisers ; generous to excess ; usually merciful to the vanquished, and courteous to the humblest of his subjects. But against this string of virtues we

have to set,—terrible in anger ; unsparing in punishment ;* proud and obstinate in all matters touching his divine and kingly rights, and fanatic in religion. Combining the two last-named points of character, though he permitted foreigners to worship after their own ways, he forbade them to teach, insisting that he had a right to decide that his own subjects should follow no tenets but those of the Coptic Church, and ordering such as had adopted Roman Catholicism to recant. As for the Mohammedans he threatened them that, so soon as he should have subdued their Galla co-religionists, he would give them the alternative of baptism or quitting the country.

How far he progressed with these and other reforms, I cannot say. Ignorance and ambition seem to have produced their usual results in him ; and when I hear of his wild visions of conquering Egypt and even the Holy Land, coupled with romantic aspirations for matrimonial alliance with an august member of our Royal Family, I am forcibly reminded of a confidence once imparted to me by my particular friend Dejatch Shétou, to the effect that his respected parent Oubi had serious intentions of a few weeks' razzia into France, "there were so many glass bottles and other nice things in that country !"—and am led to the belief that friend Theodore is only a very superior man *for an Abyssinian*.

I am continually examined and re-examined as to what ought to have been done to liberate the British captives ; asked to prophesy the result of the present expedition ; how long it will last, &c., &c. ; and upbraided with not having written to the 'Times' to tell the world all about it. It is useless to answer that I know no more than any one else. I *could* say that the British public need not be alarmed about Guinea-worm on the highlands, and I said so. So far as my

* Poor Plowden, when he wrote this characteristic of him, little thought that, to avenge *his own* murder, which occurred shortly after, Theodore would prove the justice of his opinion, by slaughtering 1500 men of his "own family," as he described them in a letter to Her Majesty.

knowledge of the country extended, it appeared to me that Government had very detailed and accurate information. There were hundreds of gentlemen, who having made the tour of the Nile, or visited the falls of Niagara, or served in China, or the West Indies, were fully competent to advise and correct mistakes. The British public was informed that, among many other gross blunders, Government was about to try a costly experiment in the matter of mules ; that no one ever heard of those animals being employed as beasts of burden in the tropics ; that no one who knew the style of country would dream of such a thing, and that camels were the only fit and proper animals. Beside a prejudice that natives generally find out what suits their country best ; three years with the mules in Abyssinia, and four years' very intimate acquaintance with camels in the deserts to the north of that country, have led me to believe that there are reasons why the Abyssinians should stick to their mules, the Desert Arabs to their camels, and the Ox Arabs on the swampy shores of the White Nile to their oxen. So far as I could see, it struck me forcibly that there were able men at Bombay and Aden who had means, of which they seemed to have well availed themselves, of obtaining better information than I or any one else could offer. People are very fond of criticising ; but, generally speaking, there is some small point which the critic has overlooked, or does not understand. For instance, if I were asked whether I thought the captives might have been redeemed for a comparatively small sum of money, years ago, I should say that certainly they might have been. But if asked whether any man living, sent out by the British Government with orders what he was to do and was not to do, could have managed it, I should say that decidedly he could not. Government is hampered by public feeling and traditional policy, which are all very well when dealing with civilized nations ; but British Lion always acts more or less like a donkey when he has to do with people who are not in the habit of studying 'Vattel.' He sends embassies and consuls, and makes treaties, and goes through all the formulæ of state diplomacy with a half-naked nigger who, in solemn council with his ministers, would find

unutterable amusement in letting off a box of lucifers—First Lord of the Treasury vying with Lord Chancellor who should have “next go.” Superior as our Theodore may be, how much might have been done with a few dozen gilt Christmas crackers, with bull’s-eyes inside ! That is, after Chancellor of the Exchequer and Principal Secretary of State for War had pulled and eaten enough to convince his Imperial Majesty that no danger from “medicine” or “witchcraft” was to be apprehended. British envoy must deal with nigger as if he were dealing with an Englishman. He may not deal as between man and man, but as between Government and Government. It would be inconsistent with the dignity of British Lion that his envoy should sit, as a native would; for an hour perhaps, without coming to the point, exchanging empty compliments with the Sovereign to whom he was accredited, carefully watching every change of his countenance, or tone of voice, and flattering or bullying him as he instinctively felt would be more likely to produce the desired result. He must act with the same feeling that led a very gallant officer and traveller of former days, to boast that even in the centre of Africa he had always appeared in the costume of a British officer and gentleman of the period, which, as it was then worn very tight-fitting, must have been peculiarly unsuitable. He is instructed by his Government to deliver a certain letter or message, accompanied by a present, to an individual named. He must ignore the fact that said individual does not feel as we feel, and is not bound by any of our notions on points of honour. He must carry out his instructions with true British straightforwardness, and end the palaver by insulting his sable Majesty with the refusal of the customary journey-money, on pain of dismissal. A savage ought to be treated as a child. He must either be persuaded in a manner he will understand, or whipped. Knowing nothing of Theodore personally, but speaking of his nation generally, I should never have expected to gain anything from presents to him. Taking the savage view, I should have thought him a fool to give up the goose that laid him golden eggs; and should be sure that he would trust to no promises on delivery of the prisoners. I should have tried

to put him in a good humour, while I induced his principal men, who have no personal interest in the detention of the captives, to feel strong reasons for being interested in their liberation. To effect this, a great deal of underhand, secret dealing, which no Government could sanction, would have been necessary. Failing in this, the next notion that would strike a barbarian would have been to reinstate the native chiefs of the various countries he has conquered. I have no doubt that would have been easily accomplished at the cost of a few thousand old Tower muskets, and the loan of as many dollars, repayment and good conduct guaranteed by hostages. A small sum would have sufficed, for the rebels would soon have paid themselves by plunder. But such a course would be very un-English. So nothing remained but either to leave the prisoners to rot in Magdala, or to send a British force to try and rescue them; and I am very glad the latter course has been adopted. Most people agree with that feeling, but many inquire whether it might not have been done cheaper. Possibly it might. If the whole of the country east of the Taccazy had been placed in the hands of a popular Tigrè chief, bound by his own interest and by hostages to assist us; not only with his troops, but, of greater importance, by procuring for us at fair native price supplies of such food for man and beast as the country afforded, and men and mules to clear the way and carry the baggage, we might have saved a good deal in the great question of transport. An average mule may be had in Abyssinia for 4*l.* or 5*l.*, while those bought in Spain will, with one thing and another, cost from 40*l.* to 50*l.* But it is not British policy to interfere with the existing state of things in the country. Then comes the query, whether the expedition will succeed? As a question of dynamics, I feel confident that a Nasmyth hammer will crack a nut, provided always, the nut be got under it. If Theodore or his men cut the prisoners' throats, I fear that "all the Queen's horses and all the Queen's men" will be unable to bring them to life again. If Theodore choose to run away to Kuara, I fear the expedition would not do much good by following him into inaccessible mountain districts or febrile swamps. There are no Summer

Palaces, porcelain pagodas, golden gods with diamond and ruby eyes as big as eggs. We may burn a few mud-and-thatch huts if we like ; but probably the natives will save us the trouble ; and then we may follow the example of the King of France, who, " with all his men, marched up the hill and down again." Surely it does not need 15,000 men to fight the Abyssinian army ! Certainly not ; in spite of all the wonders of " 60,000 well armed troops, and splendid cavalry," I have heard, I would willingly stand their attack with two companies of rifles, or beat up their camps, one after the other, with a battalion. Provided always—and there's the rub—*that somebody find me in stores, food, and ammunition.* • I have no doubt Sir Robert Napier would say pretty nearly the same ; but he has to keep some 400 miles of rear open, and to bring up his supplies from the coast. Generally speaking, British Lion going *blackbirding*, reminds me of the conventional Frenchman going out for a day's " le sport," with similar small game : he cannot shoot a tom-tit, unless properly got up in forest green, with a two-foot hunting-knife by his side, some twenty feet of French horn coiled round him, and the stock of his gun carved with fierce wild boars at bay. But this is a very exceptional case. The country cannot be depended upon for supplies ; and even if the natives were ever so willing, I question whether our troops would thrive on teff and dagousha cakes, or our cattle on their straw. As for fighting, I don't think many Abyssinians will care to " come on " a second time, when they have learnt the range and rapidity of fire of the converted Enfield. They might be annoying, if they fired a few miles of jungle or grass through which our troops were passing. Want of roads, and transport of supplies, will be the great difficulties to contend with. Torrent beds may in some places serve for the former ; but during the rains they would be useless, and, for some time after their cessation, many of them dangerous from fever. No one can calculate when the expedition will return ; so much depending on the whim of a self-willed, daring, and obstinate demi-savage. One thing, however, is certain,—commanded as it is, whatever can be done, will be done.

LIFE IN ABYSSINIA.

CHAPTER I.

Leave Suez—An Arab boat—Fellow passengers—My berth—Self-invited guests—Mode of learning Arabic—The Sherif Mohammed Hâshim—"Hum punk"—Arab seamanship—Volcanic remains of the Red Sea—Fire on board our vessel—My powder in danger—Fortunate deliverance—Mohammedan legends—Origin of jealousy—Adam with the body of Abel—Joseph the first clockmaker—El Oufche—The Beni Hassan—The Turk and the Arab—Catching turtles—Communism in feeding—Port of Yambo—Rahba—The holy country—My dragoman Said—Arrive off Jedda—Arabs as companions.

AFTER two years employed in wandering about Europe and the Levant, and the correct tour to the first cataracts of the Nile, I found myself, 25th March, 1843, off Suez, on board a miserable Arab boat bound for Jedda. These boats are of a model which could hardly be called "ship-shape," their after-part being very much out of water, while the bows are as ridiculously close to it. They carry two masts, the foremast being much larger than the mizen. A large latteen sail is carried on the one mast in light weather; but when it comes on to blow, this is taken in, and a smaller one hoisted on the other. I say when it comes on to blow, but I mean to blow a little; for they make for the shore, and anchor, if there be anything stiffer than a moderate breeze. They never attempt to reef, nor indeed have they any means of so doing. Such was the exterior of the boat which was to bear me to Jedda—a voyage which may occupy from nine days to three months, according to the good will or opposition of the potent god Æolus.

But for the interior of our boat. She was filled to the

deck, cabin and all, with empty rice-bags belonging to that prince of merchants, Ibrahim Pacha ; the deck only remained for the passengers, and well filled it was with them and their luggage. We mustered, I should think, nearly a hundred persons of all races—Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Bedouins, Egyptians, and Negroes—men, women, and children, all crowded together, formed a motley group—picturesque, I should perhaps have said, if it had been a little further off. Here a Turk quarrelled with a negro for his place ; there a Derwish, clad in rags of every imaginable colour, and carrying a flag similarly bedecked, offered his pipe to a fierce-looking Albanian ; and as for the women, they were all quarrelling. As I paid considerably more than any one else on board, I had the choice allowed me of any place I preferred ; the best was occupied by a native merchant and his family, and the master of the boat and my servant were for turning them out ; but they looked so snugly packed among their boxes that I could not allow of so ungallant a proceeding, and contented myself with a hole of about 5 ft. 6 in. by 3 ft. 2 in., which was scraped for me among bales and boxes, just below the mizen mast. What I lost, however, in point of comfort was amply repaid by the civility and good neighbourship of the party, who not only made themselves as agreeable as possible, but also spoke highly of me to the rest of the passengers, and thus rendered the voyage very agreeable. My den, after all, was tolerably snug, though I could not lie down full length in it ; nor was the atmosphere any cooler than necessary ; for to protect myself from the heat of the sun at noon, and from the dews which fell heavily during the night, I had covered it with a blanket, which was obliged to be rather low down (not quite 3 feet high), as the sail shifted over it. The myriads of parasitical animalculæ, too, of various descriptions, which swarmed in the boat, annoyed me grievously for two or three days, but I soon got accustomed to them. One by one the passengers scraped acquaintance with me, and when my covering was removed they would come and chat with me. In this way I soon got great

friends with all on board : two or three, indeed, of the party (the skipper was one, and a young Sherif, or lineal descendant of the Prophet, another) arrived at such a degree of intimacy that they would come and sit with me after dark when all the rest had retired. There was, however, a secret in this ; they once found me drinking something, and, on inquiring what it was, I told them "sherbet of our country." On their asking permission to taste it, I said it might not be right for them to do so, though as far as I was concerned they were welcome. Notwithstanding this hint that it contained some unlawful matter, they seemed anxious to test its merits, and I allowed them to do so : the first evening it was a sip, the second a gulp, and the third a glass ; rather strong "sherbet" it was too, for it contained a good proportion of rum. In this way I in a short time learnt enough of Arabic to make myself understood without the aid of an interpreter ; and my friend the Sherif Mohammed Hàshim wishing to learn Italian, we mutually assisted each other. He soon made some proficiency in his studies, which he evinced by calling the captain by opprobrious names, such as "sheep's head," "cabbages," "donkey's ears," &c., and then translating the same for his benefit. One night, the grog being a little stronger and in greater quantity than usual, he asked me what that sort of "sherbet" was called in English ; I told him rum punch ; he then went the round of the passengers, and, waking them out of their sleep, informed them, with many hiccups, that "hum punk" was "moldo bonio."

We had twenty-three days' voyage to Jedda, the wind being contrary during the greater part of the time. A steamer would do it perhaps in three days, and an English sailing vessel in six or seven. It struck me forcibly that Arab seamanship consists of lying to when it blows unfavourably, and not working when the wind is fair.

Notwithstanding these precautions many boats are lost ; and it is wonderful that any arrive safe at their destination ; for, unprovided as they are with either charts, log, sounding-lines, or other means of discovering their whereabouts, they

are obliged to keep as close to the shore as possible, and trust to recognising landmarks. Such navigation would not be so dangerous were the coast pretty clear; but the shores of the Red Sea are bordered by never-ceasing shoals of coral, many of which are barely covered by the water, and through which the boats thread their precarious course, trusting only to the rather irregular look-out kept by an Arab sailor.

The region around the Red Sea appears to contain many volcanic remains, and also a great number of mineral, or rather hot, springs. Of the latter may be mentioned the Springs of Moses; the Birket Faraoun, or Pool of Pharaoh, a sulphurous spring; the springs of Hadjar-el-Ma, or "the Stone of Water," near Tor; and others, which are towards the northern extremity of the gulf. Near Lit are the springs called Sâfra, probably sulphurous also, from the name, which, applied as an adjective to water, would mean yellow: and I shall have occasion to mention my visit to that of Ailat, near Massâwa. A friend of mine at the latter place informed me that there were nearly a hundred such springs in different parts of Arabia and near the Red Sea, but that those of Ailat and Sâfra were the most esteemed for their healing properties.

Passing under the mountain at the foot of which is the Birket Faraoun, I was shown a hill opposite to it, from which is said to spring a fountain of oil (petroleum); and the hill has in consequence been called Djebel ez Zeyt, or the Oil Mountain. I could not land to visit either of these places, as we were lying off becalmed, at a considerable distance from the shore.

Near Tor, and indeed in one or two places on the coast, I observed that the ground was spread with fossil remains of shells and other marine objects: even some of the hills seemed to be principally formed of the same material. I made particular inquiries about volcanoes, either active or dormant: one, the name of which I forget, was said to have been in action within the memory of man. The Bird Mountain, or, as it is also called, the "Djebel Dokhân," or

Smoke Mountain, is said still to emit smoke, but not fire. This is in an island south of Jedda, where is also a sulphur-mine, which the Egyptian Government either proposed to work, or, having attempted to do so, abandoned. In many places, however, on the coast, the appearance of the rocks would induce a traveller, even as ignorant as myself in geological matters, to imagine that he could trace the work of the lame old blacksmith.

During the first part of our voyage we had occasionally some rather rough weather, which made our decks, especially the parts occupied by females, anything but agreeable. Once we were in imminent danger of being burnt all standing. We were lying becalmed at a considerable distance from the land. I was quietly smoking, when I heard a confused noise, and mingled cries of "fire!" "water!" "he dropped a hot coal from his pipe!" &c. I felt very guilty, thinking it might be mine they were alluding to: but no, *mine* was all right. The smoke, however, which was rising from the middle of the cargo, proved that all was not right *there*: and the fact was that an Albanian, seated on a pile of boxes, had dropped a lighted coal, which, finding its way between them, got at last among his Highness's empty rice-bags. What was to be done? To move the baggage was hopeless, there was such a lot of it. The only way was to souse the whole with water. This was accordingly done, but to little effect at first, for to all appearance the smoke was rapidly increasing. During the whole affair there was such confusion as was never, I believe, seen except among Arabs—the crew and greater part of the passengers of both sexes crowding near the place, each anxious to do something, and in consequence every one preventing his neighbour from doing anything. All were out of their minds with fright, which they evinced according to their different dispositions,—some screaming, some swearing, some praying. I tried to be of use; but finding that, partly from the confusion and partly from my Arabic not being over-intelligible, I could not gain a hearing, I retired quietly into my hole, and philosophically lighted another pipe, but was not long allowed to

remain in peace. Several voices cried out to throw all the powder overboard ; and accordingly about a pound or two was collected from the passengers and committed to the deep ; and it being known that I had a good stock of that article with me, the Captain came to ask where it was, that it, as well as the rest, might be deprived of its explosive propensities by a ducking. In answer to this inquiry I merely said " Under! under!" and pointed downwards. Now the cabin was immediately under me, and could not possibly be got at, being jammed to the door with baggage. Never did I see such a grimace of horror as the poor Captain made at the idea of being inevitably blown up. But the powder was not in the cabin! Nor had I told a lie. I had a square deal box bound with iron, containing about 38 lbs. of Pigou and Wilks's best, *under* me, for I was sitting on it at the moment. I wasn't of course going to throw it away till it was absolutely necessary, for what should I then have done in Abyssinia? My little innocent deception, however, did more good than anything else, for the Captain rushed back, swearing that there were "several cantars" (hundredweight) of powder among the sacks in the cabin. At this news the screams of the women, the prayers of the derwish, and the oaths and (what was of more importance) exertions of the men redoubled ; and in a short time, to the great relief of all, the ship was pronounced out of danger by fire,—for the time at least. Then there was a display of all sorts of articles of ladies' and gentlemen's dresses, which were taken out of their deluged cases and hung up to dry. The water which had reached the well was pumped out, and all was quiet again. It would have been rather awkward had we been burnt there, several miles from land, in a sea full of sharks, and with a very small canoe (at best capable of carrying only ten persons) as our only means of escape.

The evening of the 31st of March saw us anchored off Ras Mohammed, and next day we set sail again, but owing to contrary winds made but little progress, anchoring for the night in a picturesque creek. On the 2nd of April we crossed for the Gulf of Akaba, with a fair wind and a heavy

sea running. To while away the time my friend the Sheriff and others related to me some stories from their version of the Old Testament. They ascribed the origin of jealousy as well as other sins to the first woman. When Adam and Eve were in Paradise they were for some time a most happy couple (it may be supposed for a month or two, like most married couples). Adam was in the habit of going every evening to heaven to pray. The Devil, who had studied the female mind and knew its weak points, thought that the introduction of jealousy might be a good foundation whereon to build much mischief. So he went to Eve, and, after propitiating her by well-timed flattery, inquired after Adam. Eve replied by informing him whither her husband was gone. At this the Devil smiled incredulously, but said nothing; and even when our first mother pressed him to tell her the meaning of his smile, refused to answer for a time, feigning that he would not hurt her feelings, or injure the reputation of his friend. Such conduct was only additional evidence of his profound acquaintance with the weaknesses of the female heart, for by so acting he wrought strongly on her curiosity as well as her suspicion, till at last he informed her, with every appearance of sorrow, that Adam was deceiving her, and paying his addresses to another lady. At this Eve laughed scornfully, saying, "How can this be? for I know that there is no woman created except myself!" The Devil again smiled with an expression of pity. "Alas! poor thing," said he, "if I show you another woman, will that undeceive you?" She assented, and he showed her a mirror!

I need not describe the scene which ensued. My readers will all understand what sort of a reception Adam was likely to meet with on his return; and hence the beginning of domestic dissensions and curtain lectures.

"Poor race of men! said the pitying spirit,
Dearly ye pay for your primal fall:
Some flow'rets of Eden ye still inherit;
But the trait of the Serpént is over them all!"

When Adam found the murdered body of Abel, not knowing what to do with it, he carried it about on his shoulders for twenty days. Allah, at last taking pity on him, sent a crow, which likewise carried its dead offspring on its back. The crow flew before Adam, till, coming to some sand, it scratched a hole and buried its young. Adam saw it, and did the same.

To Joseph is assigned by tradition the invention of clocks; they say that he constructed one with wooden works when in prison in Egypt. The story of his early life is nearly the same as our own. They state, however, that the sum paid for him by Potiphar, who was a captain in the "Nizam" of Pharaoh's army, was 25 paras, equivalent to about 1½*l.* English money.

In the afternoon of the 4th of April we arrived at El Ouéche. This is an Arab village at some distance from the shore: but they have a sort of bazár or market on the beach for the convenience of vessels, which usually stop here and take in a supply of provisions and water. Many of the pilgrims returning from Mecca prefer coming hither by land and crossing over to Cosseir; thence by the desert to Keneh, on the Nile; whence they take boat to Cairo. There were many persons now waiting to cross. I was struck by the clearness of the water, which from its bright blue colour put me in mind of the Lake of Geneva. Multitudes of fish, of every shape, size, and colour, attracted by the bits thrown overboard, shoaled round the vessel; they, in their turn, were lures to a number of gulls, divers, and cormorants, who fearlessly perched on our vessel and rigging, waiting the moment to pounce upon their prey.

On the 6th of April we arrived off Djebel Hassan. Here one of my friends, a young Arab of the tribe of Beni Hassan, left me; he was a very good youth, and son of one of the chiefs. I had had many conversations with him respecting his tribe and the Bedouins in general. The Beni Hassan are, however, for the most part fishermen, only a few wandering inland. On this account they would be looked upon, no doubt, as having degenerated from the

true habits of the migratory tribes. Notwithstanding my religion, against which the Bedouins are in general more prejudiced than even the people of Mecca or Medina, this youth had become exceedingly friendly with me, and asked me to visit him in his country, promising that I should be well received, and that he would give me in marriage his second sister, the prettiest girl in the tribe. A young Turk, who was standing by, asked in a rather insolent manner if he would give him as good a reception, should he come. To this the Arab replied by passing his hand across his throat, which drew a laugh from the bystanders. The Arabs hate the Turks, looking upon them as their natural enemies; being, too, of a different sect, they have not even religious sympathy for each other.

After having left Djebel Hassan a few hours, we passed a couple of turtles basking together on the water. A man instantly jumped overboard, though we were running at a great pace, with a fine breeze blowing. The Arab, who was a splendid swimmer, soon reached the turtles, and kept them from diving by turning their fore flappers upwards, till one or two more hands came to his assistance. The boat was hove to, and the canoe sent off to pick them up, and all arrived safe on board. They proved of a good size, and their shells valuable. In the evening their flesh was made into a sort of soup, or rather stew, of which I was invited to partake. It was in one large wooden bowl, round which sat about twenty convives. My own black servant sat next to me, and every one dipped his hand, armed with a piece of bread, into the same dish. At the time of my voyage to Jedda this sort of communism in feeding was rather extraordinary to me; but since that time I have for years been in the constant habit of "dipping my finger in the dish" with niggers, and think even now that that mode of eating is far more convenient, and, as it is practised in the East, quite as cleanly as the use of knives and forks; and, after all, "fingers were made first."

Nothing of interest occurred during the remainder of our voyage. We passed the port of Yambo, a large village, in

which I remarked nothing particular to distinguish it from any other Arab village of the Red Sea, except that it is surrounded by a very slight wall, and that, if possible, it is fuller of dates, flies, and stinks than most of them.

Three days after we put into Rabba. This is on the northern frontier of the holy country called Hedjaz, from its being the land of pilgrimage; or perhaps the name would be better derived from the flight of the Prophet, whence is dated the Mohammedan era. Here the pilgrims cast off their old garments, and with them their worldly thoughts, and put on white robes. The niggers, of whom we had several on board, became wonderfully sedate and godly, to the great amusement of my dragoman, Said, who, though a nigger himself, and a Mussulman by birth, had, from having mixed all his life with Europeans, imbibed much of their ideas in spiritual matters (perhaps still more in *spirituous* matters). The evening we arrived at Rabba he asked me leave to go ashore. On my inquiring what for, he said to change his clothes and his habits; but the facetious twinkle of his eye induced me to believe that he was not a true penitent: however, I gave him leave, and he returned very late, and rather the worse for liquor.

Next day we arrived in sight of Jedda; and although, from the kindness and good humour of my fellow passengers, the voyage had passed agreeably, still we were all very glad when the look-out announced that the minarets of the town were visible. Arabs in general are easily managed. They are at first disposed to be troublesome in their curiosity, and occasionally rather insolent; but if they see that the traveller is inclined to make himself pleasant, and to bear with them, they are always ready to meet him more than half way.

CHAPTER II.

Jedda—The British Consul—Eastern towns—Native dress—The Fettah el Kheyr—Cockroaches—Souâkin—M. Vignon—Native duels—Mode of treating doctors—Fish—Massâwa—Angelo the Jew—The Kuimagam—The climate of Massâwa—Its inhabitants and houses—My host—My costume in the East.

FROM the sea the town of Jedda appears to great advantage. The white houses and minarets are always striking objects in a tropical climate, especially when contrasted with the blue sky, and its reflection on the equally blue water. The entrance to the inner harbour is rendered extremely difficult by a triple row of coral-reefs, just covered by the water, among which a vessel standing inward has to thread her way through a narrow and zigzag passage. The larger class of ships trading between this port and Bombay remain outside; even our small boat touched three times before we effected an entrance. I was right glad to find myself ashore, even at Jedda, and soon found my way to the house of our worthy consul, Mr. A. C. Ogilvy, to whom I bore a letter of introduction. I spent an agreeable fortnight under his roof, till a boat bound for the coast of Abyssinia left the port.

During my stay I visited several native houses in the town, and took frequent walks in the neighbourhood. There is nothing of very great interest in either the one or the other. I had made a plan for visiting Mecca, in which some of my former friends of the boat had joined me; but I was dissuaded by the consul, who told me that the risk of being kept there till I consented to profess Mohammedanism was far too great to be repaid by anything I might see during my transitory visit.

One day while walking on the beach I saw some fishermen drawing in their nets, and was astonished at the extraordinary variety, both in shape and colour, of the fish they had caught. Many of them were of the most brilliant hues: one in particular was striped scarlet and a bright ultra-marine blue. I tried to preserve some by skinning them; but the entire loss of the brilliancy of their colouring so much dispirited me that I gave up the attempt.

The town has been compared by a former writer to the "whited sepulchres" of Scripture, which are described as fair outside but filthy within: so, indeed, is Jedda. The favourable opinion which the traveller forms of its exterior as he approaches it from the sea is soon dissipated as he picks his way through the filth that in many places is allowed to remain thickly strewed in the narrow alleys which in all Oriental cities are the substitutes for streets. On the whole, Jedda is a tolerably well-built town, having its bazárs, mosques, dates, flies, filth, &c., in common with every town in these longitudes.

It is surrounded by a wall sufficiently strong to resist the attacks of the Bedouin, but useless against artillery. The country immediately round it is an open tract of sand without a vestige of herbage; but farther inland, especially in the direction of Mecca, several hills are to be seen. Water is scarce, as it can only be procured from a distance; nor is it always very good or wholesome. The markets are tolerably well supplied with vegetables, brought from the interior; the chief sorts of which are water-melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, sweet potatoes (goulgas), onions, &c. For fruit, they have small apricots, lemons, oranges, pomegranates, bananas, and last, but not least in quantity, dates. The population varies, I should say, from 15,000 to 50,000 according to the number of pilgrims which may be there. The costumes to be seen are of course very numerous, as natives of all the Mohammedan nations flock to the pilgrimage. The dress of the natives of the country differs but slightly from the Egyptian: the Bedouin Arabs, however, substitute the "abaia," or hair cloak, for the jibba; and a

"koffya," or handkerchief, usually of red, with yellow-and-gold border and fringe, is worn by them on the head instead of the turban. For weapons, they use a long gun and a "crooked knife or creese, called "jembiya."

I left Jedda on the 8th of May, and got on board the fast-sailing good ship 'Fettah el Kheyr;' captain and owner, Omar Hamdan. We were delayed two days, waiting for the skipper to come off, or (as he explained it on his arrival) for the wind. With a fair breeze and plenty of sea running, we steered on the 10th for Souàkin, on the opposite coast. The description we had received of our boat was in some respects true, in others very false: she was long and narrow, and, even when laden, remarkably high out of water. Her owner appeared to have gained some ideas from the Indian traders who frequent the port of Jedda, for her rig had some small affinity to that of a brigantine; it was a hybrid between that class of vessel and a felucca. Her sailing qualities were not altogether overrated, for when running she was decidedly fast, though she was sadly wanting when the wind was anything but "*à puppa*." In these cases she fully answered the purposes of a bathing machine, being as often under water as above it. For her other qualities, her great safety appeared to depend on her bottom being constructed much after the fashion of the Irishman's shoes, which had holes in the soles, whereby the water ran out as fast as it got in. My accommodation was nominally superior to that I enjoyed in the Bakhita, for I had half of the cabin under the poop, the other half being occupied by some slaves belonging to a merchant on board. But it must not be understood that the cabin was elegantly furnished, as in a yacht or steamer; it was merely a space in the vessel, the bare planks which surrounded it being not even planed; and the swarms of cockroaches and other insects with which it was filled were its only furniture. The want of air, too, rendered it the abode of bad smells and excessive heat, the former of which were partly owing to a very primitive sort of quarter gallery, the access to which was just at my bed-head. During the whole of the voyage I preferred sleeping on deck with the other

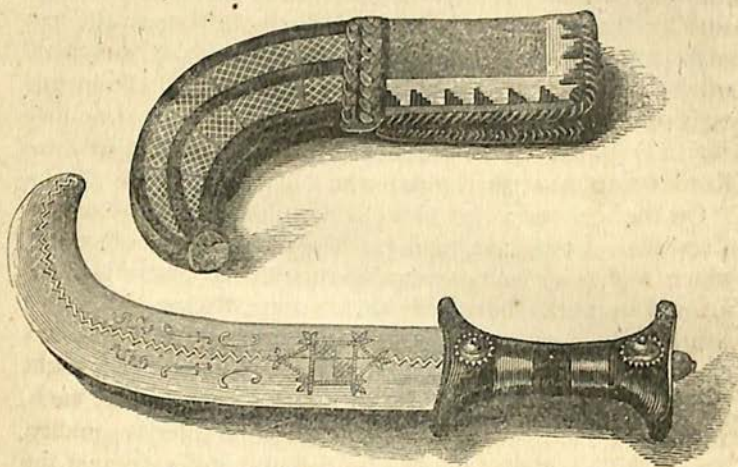
passengers. The only drawback to this was that in the morning we were literally wet through with the dew, and that the facetious cockroaches amused themselves greatly at our expense ; for, awaking in the night, we were sure to find one poking its head into each nostril, others in the ears, mouth, &c. ; and it was almost impossible to drink, from the myriads which swarmed on the mouths of the leather bottles used for carrying and cooling water. The food we ate, too, and everything else, was full of these disgusting insects ; and notwithstanding all the care of the cook, I seldom sat down to dinner without eating two or three by mistake, especially if stewed prunes, to which they nearly assimilate in size and colour, happened to be served.

On the 15th we neared Souàkin. As we arrived in the evening, we lay outside till morning ; another vessel lay near us, outward bound. After we had been anchored some time, she sent a boat off to us, requesting me to visit a French gentleman who was lying on board her sick of a fever. I immediately went to him, and found it was a M. Vignon, who had been for some time in Abyssinia as draughtsman to a scientific expedition, sent there for commercial and other investigations. He had, poor fellow ! already lost three of his companions by illness or accident, one only besides himself surviving. He had mounted a dromedary to visit some ruins near Souàkin ; the animal was young and hot, and he, being unaccustomed to camel-riding, was thrown on his chest. In these climates a little thing is sufficient to produce fever, and I found him lying on the deck, evidently in a hopeless state. I furnished him with some medicine and other little comforts which he asked of me, and left him late, promising to visit him in the morning early, as he wished to be bled. I did not think it would be good for him ; but as he persisted, I promised to come, though I had resolutely refused to bleed him in the evening, as the dew was falling fast, and the sun had long set. The fulfilment of my promise was, however, prevented ; for though I kept watch all night lest I should oversleep myself, at three o'clock I saw his vessel making sail, and our boat,

which had since the previous evening been ashore with the skipper, was not yet come off. The sails of his ship flapped a mournful adieu, and then filling, a steady breeze soon bore her far from us. Poor fellow! I heard of his death at Jedda shortly after my arrival at Massàwa.

As soon as the skipper came off we stood in, and in a short time anchored in the harbour of Souàkin. The town consists of two mosques, a few stone houses, including that of the Governor, and a number of huts, which extend along the beach of the mainland. The hills to the right of the town, looking from the harbour, form a beautiful distance from their picturesque outline. The plain, too, may be said to be a step above the neighbourhood of Jedda in fertility, though it cannot boast of much except by comparison; a solitary date-palm in the town, and a few stunted bushes rising out of the sand, being all the vegetation that I saw. The Governor of the place was a Galla slave of Osman Pacha, then Governor of Jedda; his name was Yussuf Aga. Hearing that a European was on board, he was civil enough to come off in state and call upon me; he made himself very agreeable, and remained with me for some time, chatting on the affairs of Egypt. After he had left me I sent him a small telescope as a present, and he in return sent me a supply of fresh provisions for the remainder of the journey, consisting of about twenty fowls and other necessities. There being many sick persons on board, I got into a rather extensive medical and surgical practice. One man came off to have some wounds on his shoulders patched up; he had been fighting a duel, and I never saw any one more terribly mauled than he was. The mode of fighting here is rather a good one, as it seldom endangers life: instead of the straight lancet-pointed knife worn by most of the tribes of Upper Egypt, the Souàkin people carry one the point of which is brought back like a hook, and which, though sharpened on either side, is so much crooked as to render it difficult to inflict a severe wound with it. Armed with these weapons the combatants stand opposite to each other, stripped to the waist, and hack away over one another's shoulders, till one,

tired of the fun, fainting from loss of blood, or giving up, is pronounced vanquished. While doctoring him, a bystander remarked that I should be careful, as the people of Souàkin



Knife worn by the people of Souàkin.

looked upon doctors as altogether responsible for the life of their patients. I was told that a Syrian, who hoped that his brains might aid him to fill his belly, came to set up as a doctor in these out-of-the-way parts. Unluckily one of the first patients he was called upon to attend was an Arab, who had suffered some severe accident; the doctor applied the lancet, and in a few minutes after the man died. The friends of the deceased took the poor doctor, who, being judged by public opinion to be guilty of the patient's death, was condemned to die; and so, according to my informant; they took him outside the town, and chopped him into small pieces.

The inhabitants of Souàkin and its neighbourhood are called Hadarba, and their language Hadandäwy. Their origin is probably the same as that of the great tribe of Bisharin, which inhabits the whole of the eastern desert from Upper Egypt to the northern frontier of Abyssinia. In manners, appearance, and costume, however, like the in-

habitants of most commercial seaport towns in these countries, they differ considerably from the parent stock, owing to their intercourse with other nations, from whom they have borrowed, not only some ideas, but also some blood. Ivory, ostrich-feathers, and such-like produce, brought from the interior by the Arabs, appear to be among the principal articles of export trade. The former are brought from all parts of Nubia, and many of the Hadarba (a truly commercial race) go even to Musselamiya, on the Blue Nile, and to Kordofan to make their purchases.

On the 17th we sailed; but, as not unfrequently occurs to a traveller who is anxious to reach his destination, the wind, which had been in a favourable quarter so long as we remained in port, shifted about the day we set sail. The weather was, however, very fine, sometimes quite calm, and so of an evening we amused ourselves by fishing. One night we caught thirty-one rock-cod, averaging about 12lbs. each, and a few more fish of a larger size, but inferior quality. The cod are red-coloured like mullet, and are esteemed the best fish of the Red Sea; they are, however, but poor flabby things, compared with the fish of our colder latitudes. Numbers of sharks were in calm weather to be seen about the vessel, but from want of proper tackle we did not succeed in catching any of them, though one hungry fellow ran off with the hook and part of a line.

At length we arrived one fine evening in the bay of Massawa. I tumbled into a boat, and got on shore immediately. On the beach I was accosted by a queer-looking white man, who had come down to inquire for letters or messages from Jedda or Cairo. He addressed me in pretty good Italian, and I remembered that Mr. Ogilvy had told me of a Jew named Angelo, who he doubted not would put me in the way of anything I wanted at Massawa. On my inquiring for lodgings he invited me to pass the night at the house of the French consular agent, which he had in charge during its owner's absence. I accepted his invitation, and we started for the town. On the way he suggested that it would be as well to pay our respects to his Excellency the

Governor, and so we turned down a narrow lane till we arrived at his residence. We were shown into a shed, surrounded by a sort of mud bench, on which were squatted a number of sailors, merchants, and others. The then Governor (or as he is called "*Kaimagàm*") of Massàwa was a white slave of the Pacha of Jedda, named Rustoum Aga. The rank of *Kaimagàm* is in the regular Turkish or Egyptian army equivalent to Lieutenant-Colonel, but in the irregular troops merely means a petty governor or tax-collector of a village,—his rank of course depending on the amount of authority he can exercise and the number of troops under his command. Rustoum Aga has thirty Albanians with him. In the provinces of Sennaar each village has its *Kaimagàm*, who is merely a private soldier in the service of the Cashif of the district. His Excellency received us but coolly. Angelo went to him and spoke on business of his own, while I was left to find a seat among the sailors at the opposite end of the room. The fact is, my costume was not the most elegant; and, as in all countries people are judged either by their dress or by their company, it was not likely that Rustoum would form a very high opinion of me, appearing as I did. After having made our salàm we proceeded to the French consul's town-house. Like all the best houses in Massàwa, it consisted of a large yard, in which were a square building of rough stone, as a warehouse for goods, and a few wicker sheds for dwelling. The inferior houses are all of the latter class. The first impression one naturally receives is that their owners must be very ignorant of architecture, but the climate has taught them that sheds tolerably well thatched, and with the sides either entirely or nearly open, are the only habitable houses. Towards the latter end of the month of May I have known the thermometer rise to about 120° Fahrenheit in the shade, and in July and August it ranges much higher. Such a climate is of course most unhealthy,—especially so during the summer months, when a number of dangerous diseases prevail, such as dysentery and the usual fevers of the tropical countries. The island is a mere rock of coral, without a vestige of vegetation

to enliven its bare face. There are cisterns for collecting the rain-water (no spring existing), but most of these have been allowed to fall into disuse, and the inhabitants of the island are obliged to trust to Arkiko, a village on the mainland, distant some three or four miles, for their supply. This water, moreover, is rather brackish. The extreme heat of the place would not appear extraordinary to any one acquainted with its position. Massawa is open on the one side to the sea, while the other is shut in by an amphitheatre of distant hills,—sufficiently near, however, to prevent its receiving a breath of air from that direction, but, on the contrary, to collect, as it were, the rays of the sun into the narrow slip of land they enclose.

The village is situated on the western extremity of the island, which is scarcely a mile long, measured from east to west, by not quite half that breadth. The eastern portion of it is occupied by the burial-ground, a guard-house, and the cisterns I have just noticed. The costume of the people is adapted to the climate. Out of doors the men wear a long shirt, and some even a caftan of silk or cloth. Their head-dress consists either of a tarbush (or red cap), or of an embroidered white skull-cap, wrapped round with a muslin turban. Indoors most of these articles of show are laid aside, they wear a light cotton napkin about their loins and a skull-cap on their heads. Then, stretched on a *serrir* (or couch), covered with a piece of hide or a mat, they take a *natural hot-air bath*. The women are as lightly clad; a napkin of striped cotton round their loins, and when out of doors a large blue “*milaya*” (or sheet), with which they cover themselves after the manner of all women of the East, being their costume.

The people of Massawa are, as would be naturally expected, rather weak, and wanting in energy. Their subsistence is derived entirely from commerce,—a line of life particularly suited to such a climate, as affording them means of employing and amusing the mind, while at the same time the body is enjoying “*otium cum dignitate*,” stretched out on the benches of a *café*. I have heard many Europeans

speak of the severe effect the heat had on them. Strange to say, during the short time I passed at Massàwa I never suffered at all. The whole day was spent by me in running about, either catching insects in the sun, or otherwise actively employing myself, while my servants were thrown down in the shade with the perspiration running off them in streams. After I had been two days at Massàwa, the house of Housséin Effendi, scribe to the Government, was procured for me. It was situated on the sea-shore, and consisted of two courts, one of which contained a "marabba" (a square stone magazine) and a wicker shed; the other had two more sheds, pleasantly situated on the beach. One of these latter had been lately erected for the wedding of the Effendi's son. It was very tastefully built, and at one end was the bridal couch, perched up several feet above the ground, like the berth of a steamer, and having a small entrance like a pigeon-house. Its sides were neatly made of canes, laid so as to form various patterns. This hut had a window on to the sea, and was about the only place where I could obtain a breath of air during my whole stay; and that, too, was very warm. The stone "marabbas" of which I have spoken are built as a protection against fire; for the rest of the town being formed entirely of sticks and straw, it is not at all wonderful that every now and then the whole is burnt to the ground. It would, however, be impossible to live in stone walls. Having one day to arrange some of my goods for convenience in travelling, we went into the magazine to do so. The heat was so oppressive, that my native servants, though stripped to the skin (with the exception of a small napkin for decency's sake), were unable to remain many minutes at a time inside. The whole furniture of my room consisted of the before-mentioned "serrir." This is a sort of couch or stretcher, being an oblong frame of wood placed on four legs, and covered in some cases with strips of hide, crossing one another so as to form a seat, or of cords made of the fibres of the date-palm. The latter are more used by the people of the Arabian coast. The sailors make them very neatly, dyeing the cords of various colours,

and then placing them across the "serrir," so as to form patterns.

I passed ten days at Massàwa, when, having completed the necessary arrangements, I thought it time to make a start for the interior. One part of these arrangements, and truly a very essential one, was to divest myself of every needless incumbrance, and pack up my stores in a safe place. Accordingly, my last articles of European dress were offered to my friend Angelo, as a recompense for his civility. I had already given away a large portion at Cairo, and now possessed only three Turkish shirts, three pairs of drawers, one suit of Turkish clothes for best occasions, a pair of sandals, and a red cap. From the day I left Suez (March 25, 1843), till about the same time in the year 1849, I never wore any article of European dress, nor indeed ever slept on a bed of any sort,—not even a mattress; the utmost extent of luxury which I enjoyed, even when all but dying of a pestilential fever that kept me five months on my beam-ends at Khar-toum, was a coverlid under a rug. The red cap I wore on leaving Massàwa was soon *borrowed* of me, and the sandals after a month were given up; and so, for more than three years (that is till I reached Khartoum) I wore no covering to my head, except a little butter, when I could get it; nor to my feet, except the horny sole which a few months' rough usage placed under them. During the whole of this time I never had a headache, though exposed to the sun at all hours of the day, and was never foot-sore, though I walked constantly in the roughest imaginable places.

CHAPTER III.

*The Naïb's Guide-tax—Moncullou—A wayside bath—Snakes—
Elephants—Lions.*

I HAD made up my mind to pay a short visit to Ailat,—a hot mineral spring a day's journey from Massawa,—for the sake of the shooting for which that neighbourhood is justly celebrated. I accordingly sent for the Naïb (or Governor of that part of the mainland which lies along the coast immediately opposite to Massawa, and which has for a long time past been considered as tributary to the Ottoman empire), in order to make friends with him, and at the same time demand his assistance in procuring for me camels to carry my baggage, a mule to carry myself, and a guide for the whole concern. It is customary for every traveller, whether native or foreigner, who may have to pass the Naïb's territory, either in coming from Abyssinia to Massawa, or the reverse, to take a guide from the aborigines, who are called "Saho" or "Shoho," for which he pays half a dollar. This tax is a regular imposition, the road being neither dangerous nor difficult to find; but as by this custom money is brought into the country, and probably also into the hands of the Naïb (who, no doubt, has a good understanding with the "Delll" or "Merrahit," as the guide is called), it is not allowed to be given up. The then Naïb Yehya was an old man, said to be friendly to the English interest; but being from his age more or less incapacitated for business, his son Mohammed looked after the government in his stead, in which indeed the father had only been lately reinstated, having from political motives been superseded for some time by his rival Naïb Hassan. Mohammed

very soon paid me a visit, was extremely civil and polite, and promised to make every arrangement necessary for my departure on the morrow. I gave him a muslin turban as a present, and we parted the greatest friends possible. Accordingly, on the following day, I set out about three o'clock, crossing in a ferry-boat from the island to a point on the mainland which serves as a pier or landing-place. Here I observed lying on the ground a stone capital and some fragments of an ancient column, which, on inquiry, I was informed were brought from one of the neighbouring islands (I believe "Dhalac"), where many similar ones are to be found. I also heard that the ruins of what was supposed to be an ancient Christian convent are to be seen on the coast not far distant. On landing we were disappointed at finding that our animals had not arrived; and as I was too anxious to see a little of the mainland to remain waiting for them, I left my servant with the baggage, and set out on foot alone for the village of Moncullou, where the French Consul and Husséin Effendi with other merchants have their country-houses, and where it had been arranged that we were to pass the evening. The first part of my road lay through a flat sandy country, partially overgrown, in some places, with stunted shrubs, many of which appeared to me to be very curious; but not being a botanist, I could form no decided opinion of their merits. Among them was a shrub which bears a round orange-coloured fruit, in shape and appearance much resembling the colocynth, and which, when dried, is in this country used for making snuff-boxes, the seeds having first been carefully extracted. The whole air was alive with insects of every variety both in species and hue, many of them most brilliantly coloured; and as I advanced further inland, I saw two or three different varieties of sun-birds,—one kind of a dark-brown colour, excepting his throat, which is scarlet, and his head, which is changing-green and purple; another, almost all changing-green, with a bright canary-coloured breast, and two long feathers in his tail. Wandering on, I came to a place where

the sea runs in like a creek, and, seeing a copse of fine bay-trees overhanging the water's edge, and so completely surrounding and shading a little corner as entirely to screen any one who might bathe in it both from the view of passers-by and the more trying glance of the sun above, I took the opportunity of refreshing myself and paying to the salt water my last visit for many years. The water was about five feet deep, with a smooth sand bottom. Nothing could be more delicious,—far preferable to the finest marble swimming-bath in Europe. Having bathed, I proceeded on my way, and soon after saw the man with the camels descending to meet us at the point where we landed: telling him to follow with my servant as fast as possible, and inquiring if I was in the right road, to which he replied "All right," I continued my march. I trudged on, full of everything I saw, till, on arriving at three roads, I found myself at a loss which to pursue, as they all appeared to take nearly the same direction: so, remembering the old adage, "*medio tutissimus ibis*," I chose the centre one, which seemed to be the most trodden; or rather, like Don Quixote's good old hack, I took the first that came, and followed it till I suddenly observed that the sun was gone down; and as in these countries there is no twilight to speak of, it struck me that I had no time to lose if I did not wish to be caught in the dark. I therefore quickened my step till, half an hour afterwards, finding no Moncullou, nor any sound or sign of humanity to warrant me in the supposition that I was near it, I concluded that I had overshot my mark, for at Massàwa I had been informed that it was only an hour's journey, whereas I had been walking fast for double that time. I therefore decided on employing the last remnants of light in preparing myself some corner wherein to sleep, and was just poking about with this intention when I heard voices approaching me, and running towards them was met by five little slave-girls returning to the village with wood they had been collecting. I accompanied them, and in a short time arrived at the house of

Hussien Effendi, where, having been provided with milk and other refreshments, I was told that the French Consul's lady had sent to request me to pass the night at her house, whither my beasts had preceded me.

But I must mention a little adventure which I had when within a few hundred paces of Hussien Effendi's house, and which might have proved disagreeable. It happened that I was walking with one of the little girls in advance of the others, when, putting my foot (which, with the exception of sandals, was quite bare) near an object that in the dusk had the appearance of a bit of stick or a stone, I was startled by feeling something cold glide over it, and, turning, saw a small snake wriggling off as quickly as possible in the direction of the other girls, who, on seeing it, ran away screaming. From what little I could distinguish of its form and colour, it seemed to answer the description I had heard of the cerastes, or horned viper, which is about a foot and a half long, rather thick for its length, and of a dirty, dusty colour, mottled. The horns are nearly over the eyes, and about the eighth of an inch in length. This is considered one of the most venomous of the snake tribe, and they are very numerous in this neighbourhood. I tried to kill it, but without success, as, assisted by the darkness, it got away among the underwood and grass.

Madame de Goutin, the Consul's lady, received me with the utmost politeness; and after having given me my supper, entertained me with a great deal of useful and interesting information, over a "shisha," or water-pipe. I told her of my escape from the viper, and how much I had been surprised to meet with one so soon after my landing, as I had heard in Egypt that but few were to be found in Abyssinia. She replied, that, although scarcely ever seen in the highlands, yet in the low, hot districts, such as the neighbourhood of Moncullou, they exist in great numbers, much to the annoyance of the inhabitants; that Monsieur de Goutin had been bitten by one of the same species; and that, although recourse was immediately had to the proper

remedies, the venom had for some time a severe effect on his general health. It would be highly dangerous to neglect a bite of this or any other venomous snake. Madame de Goutin told me that in cases where the persons bitten do not take precautions in time, hæmorrhage ensues on the second day, and the blood flows freely from the nose, eyes, mouth, and every pore of the skin: it may easily be imagined that, when in such a state, an extraordinary doctor and still more extraordinary remedies must be required to effect a cure. She also informed me that the game of the country is very abundant, and of great variety, from the elephant to the small and beautiful gazelle, called here the "Beni Israël." Elephants and lions generally confine themselves to the less inhabited countries about Ajlat, and the backwoods at a distance from the populous districts. They, however, occasionally venture down even as far as Moncullou. A short time since an elephant, on meeting two "shangallas," or negro slaves, belonging to an inhabitant of this village, whose occupations had led them a little farther into the woods than usual, took one of them up with his trunk, threw him into the air, and, on his falling to the ground, gored him with his tusks and trampled on him till the poor wretch was reduced to an undistinguishable mass. His companion made the best of his way home, and arriving breathless, from fear and running, told the sad fate of his fellow slave, and conducted several persons to the spot, where they found the body in the state described. The elephant, however, was gone, and no one gave himself the trouble to pursue him very far in the jungle.

On another occasion two worthy merchants were returning in the evening to Moncullou, after having finished the affairs of the day at Massawa, and, only one of them being possessed of a mule, he accommodated his friend with a seat on the crupper. They were ambling along at a comfortable pace, no doubt discussing the past day's market, when, on suddenly turning a corner, formed by some bushes growing near the roadside, they beheld, to their great dismay, an

enormous lion seated in the middle of the road, and quietly looking at them. As Balaam's ass of old saved his master's life by standing still, so did the mule in question, by running away, at a pace which, considering the double load he carried, would have been astonishing under any other circumstances. The lion, however, apparently paid little or no attention to their movements. As soon as the mule's senses and those of his master were a little restored to their wonted equanimity they returned by the same road, and, on reconnoitring, found that the lion had taken himself off, leaving the passage free; so they proceeded on their way, congratulating themselves on their lucky escape, when behold, half a mile further on, there was the lion again seated in the road, waiting for them. "Hold fast!" says he of the saddle to him of the crupper; and away they go at a tangent, as before. Returning a second time, they found the road clear, and proceeded homewards. As, however, it was getting dark, they began to feel rather alarmed. Fortunately, however, they did not see the lion again till they were nearly at home, when, perceiving him at a short distance from the road, they dodged him, and, by taking a circuitous route, succeeded in getting safe into their houses.

The lion sometimes ventures even into the villages. One night Monsieur de Goutin's family were awakened by a tremendous yelling and laughing of hyænas outside their gate. The neighbours calling out to him to shoot, Monsieur de Goutin fired from within, and afterwards went out to see the effect of his shot, but was by no means agreeably surprised on finding that a lion, who assisted at the *conversazione*, was the cause of all the hubbub, the hyænas making continued but ineffectual hostile demonstrations against his royal person. The Consul, finding a guest more than he had bargained for, retired quietly by the way he came, leaving the lion, who was too much occupied with his four-footed enemies to think of anything else.

With anecdotes such as these did my kind hostess beguile away the evening, and it was not till midnight that I was

able to retire to my couch, which I begged to have prepared for me outside with my people, instead of in-doors, as I was to rise early, in order to get as much as possible of my journey done before the heat of the day set in. So, without taking off my clothes, I lay down till three o'clock, when I was disturbed by the men preparing to start, and in a quarter of an hour afterwards we were on the road.

CHAPTER IV.

Appearance of the country—Sensations in a tropical climate—Adventure with a viper—Ailat—Game—Boar-stalking—Hot springs—Natural warm bath.

THE country through which we passed during the early part of the day is rough, wild, and, in some parts, rocky and mountainous. Large trees are rarely met with ; nothing, in fact, but shrubs and some of the different species of the mimosa tribe, the tallest of which seldom exceed twenty feet. To the sportsman I could say more in favour of the country. Before nine o'clock we had shot several guinea-fowl and some large birds of the partridge or grouse kind, and had seen several gazelle, but these were too wild to allow us to get within shot of them. There are also numbers of jackals, which might afford sport to the fox-hunter, were not the country too difficult to ride over. During the morning we killed two snakes. One of them was a viper, of a dirty, brownish colour, about a foot and a half long, very thick, with a short tail, and its head flattened, as if some one had accidentally put his foot on it. The other was as beautiful as the former was ugly. It was about fifteen feet long, and very thin, with a long tail tapering to a point. Its colour was a bright golden yellow, with a dark green back. The viper wriggled his dusty body along the ground, with a horizontal movement ; whereas the other, as if afraid of soiling his bright green and gold uniform, moved in graceful, spiral undulations.

Towards nine o'clock we descended into a thickly wooded valley, bordered on each side by rocky hills. Our road for some distance lay along the bed of a former torrent, of

which, as the dry season was now long set in, there remained but a small rippling stream, which, here trickling on a little, there losing itself entirely in the sand, still contained sufficient water to attract to its edge several sorts of wild ducks and geese,—some of beautiful plumage. These, although one might have supposed them little accustomed to man and his tyranny, were wise enough to keep at a respectful distance, flying up the stream as we approached them, and then settling again. The jungle was filled with birds, whose notes, varying in tone from the harsh scream of the blue jay to the soft bell-like note of the “gouramail,” were the only sounds heard in the vast solitude. No description can possibly convey an idea of the sensations of one who for the first time feels himself really in a tropical country, with a tropical vegetation;—the burning sun, the orange sand, the bright rich green of the foliage, bordered by a sky of the deepest blue without a cloud;—everything so different from our own chilly clime, where all nature appears like a modest virgin, shrouded by a blue heavy haze as by a veil, which dims and obscures her many beauties, and, when, as an extraordinary event, the sun shines free from mists and clouds, appears to detract from his glory, and to give a cold bluish tint to every object illumined by his rays. Here, on the contrary, as if in pride of her own loveliness, Nature has cast off the veil, and left all her glories discovered to the wondering eyes of her true admirers, who, while their weak organs of vision allow them, gaze enraptured till they can gaze no more; and then, covering their eyes with their hands, anathematize the glare and heat, and make for the nearest shelter. This was the case with us, and we were very glad to be told by the guide that there was a spot close by, convenient for its shade and the vicinity of a spring, where we might take our breakfast, and rest during the heat of the day. So we alighted, collected fuel, which was plentiful in the jungle, kindled a fire, and prepared to cook the game we had shot in the morning. But as smoke and fire are not conducive to comfort in this climate, I retired to a short distance and

spread my carpet in a natural bower formed by the over-spreading boughs of a species of mimosa, from whose yellow flowers, which emit a delicious fragrance, the Egyptians distil a perfume which they call "fitneh." Here I lay and smoked, to deaden in some degree the keen edge of my appetite; but smoke being too light a sustenance to satisfy a hungry man, I made frequent inquiries as to the state of the kitchen. On one occasion, not distinctly hearing the servant's answer, I rose to a sitting posture and repeated my question, which being satisfactorily replied to, I was about to resume my former recumbent position, when, luckily turning my eyes in the direction of my legs, I saw one of my old friends, a horned viper, crossing my carpet, on his way to the long grass and bushes on the other side. I stopped his progress with the butt of my gun; and his skin, which I preserved, paid the penalty of his impudence.

Our game proved excellent, and we remained quiet to digest it till between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. We then remounted, and continued our journey without any adventure till nightfall, when we arrived at our destination. Our approach was greeted by thousands of jackals and hyænas, which howled and screamed at us from every direction, like so many fiends, angry at being disturbed in their nocturnal orgies.

The village of Ailat, which is composed of many scattered huts built of a framework of wood filled in with branches of trees, straw, &c., and thatched, is situated on the edge of a large sandy plain, covered with bushes, and surrounded by hills of no great size. No country in the world could be better adapted for covering game, and none could be better stocked than it is. One cannot go a hundred yards from the houses without seeing something. In the morning one is awakened by the distant cry of the guinea-fowl as it leaves its perch on the trees. Grouse, partridges, wild boar, gazelle, and antelopes of every size and description, abound in the immediate neighbourhood; while elephants, rhinoceros, ostriches, and sometimes giraffe, are in the

proper season found a little further off, and beasts of prey are everywhere to be met with. The hot spring, which is situated at some distance from the village, is considered to be a favourite haunt of the lion. On the road close by a man had been killed by one just before our arrival. Of the antelopes, the agazin and arab are especially to be noticed, on account of their size. The former is dun-coloured, with narrow white pencilled stripes down his sides, has spiral horns, and is nearly the height of a cow. The other is almost of the same size and of a yellowish red colour. The wild boars are very large, and have remarkably fine tusks,—a pair of formidable ones from the upper jaw, and a smaller pair from the lower. They do not project forward, like a European boar's, but grow laterally, turning over the snout, till in some cases they almost meet. The under tusks are three-cornered, sharp-edged like a knife, and adapted so as almost to fit into the sides of the upper ones.

One morning I set out alone (my servant being occupied in stuffing some specimens which I had shot the previous evening) on an excursion in search of the hot-water springs of which I had heard so much. A little pathway having been pointed out to me as leading thither, I followed it till it divided into several smaller paths, one of which I took ; but, finding that it did not lead me right, I struck across among the bushes and arrived at the spot where report had led me to imagine the spring would lie. I here found a little trickling stream winding its way down the valley. I several times walked up and down its course, and discovered that, as above it issued from the sand, so a short distance below it was again lost in it. At last I met with two Abyssinians ; but they, being as ignorant of Arabic as I was of their language, misunderstood my questions, and pointed in the direction of the village. Thinking it possible that I might have passed the stream, I followed their indication, and so, wandering back again for several hours, I was attracted by the firing of guns, and arrived at the village nearly dead from thirst and vexation. I found my servant in a state of great anxiety on my account. He had been

on a long but fruitless search after me, and had nearly given me up for lost. Having narrated my misadventures and described to him the position of the stream, he told me that had I only followed the valley a few hundred yards farther up I should have come to the original source and bathing-place. I, however, determined not to venture again alone, but to accompany the party of bathers which starts from the village every morning before sunrise. Accordingly next morning we set out, and in due time arrived at the spot, which is situated in a narrow valley between two mountains. The site is picturesque, but the baths are rather too open to public view, and the bathers are not over-delicate in their ideas. Both sexes bathe almost in the same place, the men lying on their backs in about nine inches water, and the women sitting in a hole about ten yards below them. Most of the women and all the men were quite naked; so it may be imagined that this style of bathing would not altogether suit the ideas of the frequenters of Bath or Cheltenham, though in these latitudes such little naturalities are not objected to. While the rest of the party were thus engaged, not being anxious to join them, I walked up the valley, and had a good deal of sport among the fowl and other game that were sneaking down to the water to drink. In this way I amused myself for nearly two hours; and when I returned, I found, as I expected, that not only were all the people gone, but that the water had had time to repose: so I bathed comfortably. It was however so hot that, notwithstanding the great heat of the atmosphere and the warmth of my own body from walking, I found it difficult at first to bear my foot in it. I tasted the water, and, as far as I could guess, should think it contains both sulphur and iron. It is reckoned here a general specific for all complaints, but more especially for cutaneous diseases, many cases of which are in constant attendance. People come from the most distant parts of Abyssinia, from the islands about the Red Sea, even from Jedda and other towns on the Arabian coast, to try its efficacy, and generally, from what I hear, return well satisfied.

CHAPTER V.

Inhabitants of Ailat—Bread-making—The guest's chamber, and its occupants—Bedouin merchants—A persevering marauder—Gregarious habits of the people—Moslem peculiarities of feeding—A Moslem "wake"—Mode of burial—African resurrectionists.

THE inhabitants of Ailat are Bedouins of the Bellaw tribe, which occupies all the tract of country lying about Arkeeko, and thence to the neighbourhood of Ailat. Those of the latter district are by caste mostly soldiers, if they may be so designated. They are easily distinguished from their more peaceful brethren the herdsmen, by their wearing their hair close shaved, while the herdsmen arrange their bushy wigs in tufts or tresses on the head. Their manners are most purely pastoral. In the morning they eat a little bread and milk, and the same simple meal repeated in the evening, and seasoned with contentment and a good appetite, completes their daily nourishment. Their bread is made by the women in the following manner:—The corn is ground to flour between two stones,—a large one, rather hollowed on the surface, laid on the floor, and a smaller round pebble, by the aid of which, worked by the hand, the corn is rubbed down. It is sometimes passed through a sieve, and the coarser part rubbed down again. The sifting and second grinding are, however, seldom practised. The coarse flour thus obtained is made into a stiff paste, and then formed into small balls, which, flattened between the palms of the hands, are stuck round an earthen jar (heated by being filled with live charcoal), and left there till baked, which is quickly accomplished, as the jar soon becomes nearly red hot.

During our sojourn at Ailat we were lodged at the house

of a sort of chief of the village, named "Fakak." Here, as in Arab countries, most strangers on their arrival at a camp or town inquire for the principal man's residence, where there is usually a hut or shed set apart for their reception. In this guest's apartment we were lodged with several other persons, one of them a negro, whose bed was placed beside mine. He was an elderly man, and had come from Dhalak (recommended, no doubt, by the Faculty) to try the effect of the bathing for an old chronic disease of the skin, called here "Hickuk"—by the English doctors "scabies," and more commonly known in England by the euphonious *sobriquet* of *Scotch fiddle*.

It is a pretty sight to see these Bedouins or the Shohos encamp after a march. Many parties of them arrive here, composed principally of petty merchants, passing with their goods to and from Massawa. As they only remain during the night, they usually take up their post in the compound before the hut, and, having relieved their animals of their burdens, place the baggage together in a heap, and, sitting round it, light a fire, and prepare their provision for the evening. They sometimes make their bread themselves, but frequently the women of the house are good enough to do it for them, while the neighbours usually contribute a little milk towards their supper. Their merchandise is commonly carried on oxen or asses. The former, though rather small, are of a pretty breed, being very fine about the head and legs, with a large fold of loose skin hanging from the neck; some have also a small hump: they are capable of carrying a considerable load of baggage, and thus render themselves useful and profitable to their owners at all seasons of the year, either at the plough or as beasts of burden. Once, on the arrival of a party from Abyssinia, we were much amused at the courage and perseverance with which a little bird (very common in these countries) persisted in annoying the animals of the caravan, consisting of a considerable number of mules, asses, and oxen. The poor beasts, fatigued by a long day's march, were settling down comfortably to their food, when a little greyish-brown bird, with

a blood-red beak, perched on the back of one of the oxen, and, as the by-standers assured me, began to devour it. The ox, apparently alarmed as well as irritated by this new style of goading, made a rush, kicking and lashing with his tail, and plunging about in every direction as if mad; but nothing could shake the tenacity of the little bird, who held on with his claws like grim Death, pecking away as unconcernedly as possibly, till, joining in the fray, we literally knocked him off with sticks and stones, for no intimidation would induce him to quit his post; and no sooner was he down than up again he flew on the back of the nearest mule, which he commenced tormenting as he had done the ox. We again and again floored him from the back of this and several other animals which he mounted successively, till at last, worn out by blows, he fell to the ground unable to rise; but even in this extremity his courage never forsook him, for I received many desperate pecks before I succeeded in capturing him. The people here imagine that he sucks the animals' blood, and the alarm exhibited by them on this occasion would appear to warrant the supposition, although in Abyssinia I have seen birds of the same description among the cattle, hopping on and off their backs in a quiet, business-like manner, the cows taking little or no notice of them, or permitting such liberties as philosophically as possible.

Among themselves the people of Ailat appear to be very sociably inclined. In the evening, parties of the men might be seen congregated about the doors of each other's houses to chat. Towards me they were particularly friendly, often rather too much so; for having no occupation themselves which requires solitude, they could not understand that any one else could have such, and imagined they were conferring a marked honour by remaining always about me, even when I was writing; and when I set out on a shooting excursion, I had always half a dozen or more fellows begging to be allowed to accompany me. They chased the wounded game, and carried home the dead; though, as good Mohammedans, nothing would induce them to partake of the

contents of the bag shot by a Christian, or even by one of their own religion, unless the animal's throat had been cut "in the name of God : God is most great." An Abyssinian Moslem, however, one of my attendants, found out a way of relieving his conscience and filling his belly at the same time ; for before I started he would take the ramrod, and, putting it into one of the barrels I had just loaded, tap with it, pronounce the necessary words, and then be perfectly happy in eating whatever that charge might bring down. As in shooting one can scarcely ever be sure of being in time to cut the animal's throat, they consider it sufficient to *think* the words while in the act of pulling the trigger. The animal thus killed is eatable, while that simply killed or dying a natural death is considered "futtise" or carrion, and unlawful for food.

It happened one day during my stay at Ailat that a man was taken suddenly ill, and died in the field while tending his flocks. He was carried home on a couch, and as soon as he arrived near the village, and the news of his death was spread in the place, his wife, rushing out to meet him, set up such a howling, at the same time tearing her hair, that it almost frightened me. Shortly, however, her female friends, one by one, dropped in in chorus, and then it was a complete thing ; a thousand strong-lunged jackals could not hold a candle to them. Our host the sheikh, to whom I believe the man was distantly related, came to me and borrowed three measures of flour, a candle, and two needles ; the flour was to be converted into bread for the men who had carried the corpse, and the needles were to sew his winding-sheet. The custom here is, after having washed the body, to wrap it in a sheet ; it is then laid on a couch till the grave-diggers have completed their work, during which time the women remain in-doors howling to a drum accompaniment, while the men are squatted without. In about an hour the corpse is carried off at a trot to the cemetery, usually at some distance from the village ; it is placed in the grave, which is generally very shallow, and a few stones are put down to

mark the spot where it was laid, but not where it will lie forty-eight hours after the funeral, for there is no tranquillity here for the dead. The African resurrectionists, the laughing hyænas, walk the body out of the tomb in no time. Those who can afford it pay a small sum to the priests to have a mass sung from the Koran every two or three months after the funer:¹

CHAPTER VI.

A summons to Kiaquor—Providing supper—Practice of true sportsmen—Shooting in Abyssinia—The “Kantàflafa”—A sportsman’s difficulties—Boar-stalking—Rarity of unprovoked attacks on man by wild beasts—Man-eating tigers—Solitary elephants—Rencontres with wild boars.

I REMAINED some weeks longer at Ailat, shooting and collecting specimens of natural history, till a letter from Mr. Plowden (whom I imagined to be at Àdoua) reached me from Kiaquor, a village about three days’ journey from Ailat, where, as he informed me, he lay in a state of great weakness from the effects of a severe fever, which both he and his companion, Mr. Bell, had contracted during their stay at Massàwa. They had started for the interior; but Plowden, being unable to continue the journey, remained at Kiaquor, while Bell went on to Àdoua to prepare a place for his reception. The fever, however, continued to attack him at intervals, and had reduced him to such a state of weakness that he had remained in this place for several weeks, unable to proceed, till accidentally hearing of my arrival he wrote to me, begging me to join him with all possible despatch. I accordingly determined to lose no time in my preparation for the journey to Kiaquor. In the evening before starting I went out to procure a supper for myself and numerous friends and attendants; and to tantalize my English sporting readers, I will tell them what bag I brought home in little more than an hour. My first shot brought down four guinea-fowl; my second five ditto; third, a female gazelle; fourth, her male companion; and fifth, a brace of grouse; so that in five shots I had as good a bag as in England one would get in an average day’s shooting, and after expending half a

pound of powder and a proportionate quantity of shot, caps, and wads. But I feel it my duty to explain that *I never shoot flying*, considering that unsportsmanlike. A true sportsman shows his skill by getting up to his game unperceived, when, putting the muzzle of his gun as close to the tail-feathers as he possibly can, he blazes away into the thick of the covey, always choosing the direction in which he sees three or four heads picking in a row! At any rate this is the only way you can shoot in a country where if you entirely expend your powder and shot you must starve. In Abyssinia the shooting is attended with much excitement, from the variety of game and the difficulty you have in pursuing it. My sole companion on ordinary occasions is a little boy, who carries my rifle, while I carry my gun, and we do all the work ourselves. His sharp eyes, better accustomed to the glare than my own, serve me in every point as well as a setter's nose. The country is, as I before said, sandy and covered with large bushes. In some places these are scattered, while in others they grow so thick as to form an almost impassable jungle. Most of the trees are thorny, being chiefly of the mimosa tribe, and their thorns are of a very formidable description, some of them being about two inches and a half in length, and as thick at the base as a large nail; while another variety, called in Abyssinia the "*kantàftafa*," have their short curved thorns placed on the shoots two and two together. These catch you like the claws of a hawk, and if they enter your clothes you had better cut off the sprig at once, and carry it with you till you have leisure to liberate yourself, otherwise you will never succeed; for as fast as you loosen one thorn another catches hold. Through such obstacles as these you have to fight your way, and if the day be unlucky you will perhaps start your game close under your feet, at a moment when you could not level your gun if your life depended on it. But suppose you have better luck, and have seen your chase (a boar for example) at some distance from you, then you have the real enjoyment of stalking him, and you must do it well, for no animal is more wary than the wild pig. He is probably feeding near the

middle of some open space among the trees, whence, from the bushes being scattered, he is able to discover any approaching object. He seldom trusts himself too near a



Boar Shooting.

cover; and I have observed that when stationary these animals usually feed with their tails to windward. Instinct would appear to teach them to trust to their sight for the one direction, and to the wind's bringing them sound or

scent of an aggressor from the other. Be this as it may, the right side for the sportsman is of course the wrong way of the wind ; and then he has only to guard against being seen or heard. You must now watch your opportunity, and profit by every momentary turn of his head to spring or crawl on your belly from one cover to another, and in so doing you will employ perhaps a good half-hour before you reach safe shooting distance. But you will scarcely imagine a third of that time to be passed, so great is the excitement produced by each of his motions. You will see him now and then grubbing in the ground, now taking a suspicious glance on either side, accompanied by a satisfied grunt as he returns to his meal. Again he starts at some little noise you have made (almost imperceptible to yourself) and runs a step or two, with his eyes fixed in your direction. If, however, you are cleverly covered, and the roots he has left are sweet, he will, ten to one, return. But, to cut the matter short, you have reached the nearest practicable cover, and are anxious to have a shot at him ; yet, from holding your breath and running in the heat, with your head and tail on a level, quadruped fashion, you find yourself panting and all of a shake. It would not be prudent to throw away your lead and lose your pork ; so take it coolly ; rest a moment, draw a long breath, rub the palms of your hands on your breeches (if you wear any) and then on the sand to dry them. Having done this, take a cool aim (resting your rifle if your hand be still shaky), pull steadily—beware of a jerk. Bang ! “ Wee, wee, wee ! ” He has it ! “ How so ? ” you exclaim ; “ he is off. ” He makes a furious gallop in a circle, and, returning to the place where you shot him, drops down dead.

These animals, unprovoked, never attack man ; nor do I believe in the general opinion that certain other wild beasts will do so. If wounded, or otherwise provoked or frightened, the wild boar, like all other animals, turns in self-defence on his aggressor ; and a most formidable brute he is, too, when he takes it into his head to charge. More than once I have been the object of such an attack ; but on looking round with a view to escape, it has generally happened, very luckily

for me, that the nature of the ground rendered it more prudent for me to stand where I was and defend myself. On one occasion, a wounded boar came at me in a low bush whence I had shot him ; so I dodged to the other side as he passed, and he went straight on, apparently rather pleased than otherwise to avoid the rencontre. Another time, I had killed the male, and the female who was with him (I pretend not to say by what feelings instigated, not knowing whether she was his wife or sister) charged most valiantly to the rescue. I prepared to defend myself as well as I could with the butt of my rifle, which I clubbed with both hands ; but the brute appeared unwilling to spoil so good a tool, for coming within three yards of me she dashed her snout into the sand, thereby dusting me well all over, and went to the right-about as fast as she came. I pursued her from sheer spite for the start she had given me, and, coming up, shot her as I had previously done her companion. If you take to your heels there is little chance : they soon come up with you, and send a few inches of their tusks into a part where few men would think proper to show the scar. They are, moreover, the toughest animals I ever met with, except, perhaps, the large dog-faced baboon. An old sow once amazed me by her fortitude. I had aimed at her heart, as being the most susceptible part of the *beau sexe* ; but, either from my hand being unsteady, or the rifle over-charged, I hit her back-bone, which I imagine must have been nearly severed, for she fell, the blood pouring over her sides and rump from the wound. On my going up to her she rose and crawled off on her fore-legs, dragging her hinders after her. Anxious to put her out of pain, I made at her with my bowie-knife ; but she was ungrateful enough to refuse my well-intentioned advances, each time I approached her letting drive at me with her infernally sharp tusks, one of which grazed my leg so as to draw blood, besides making a mark on the butt of my rifle, which I had put forward to guard off the blow.

I had good sport at Ailat, and strongly recommend the place to the notice of sportsmen. I killed a very great

number of every sort of antelope and gazelle, from the largest to the smallest. After bagging nearly twenty wild boar, I gave up firing at them, fearing to disturb other game, and not wishing to waste powder and ball on meat which was useless to us. As for fowl of all sorts, it was like shooting in a farm-yard. I watched several nights at the spring for lions. One night only I saw them. Two came down, but not very near me. I fired at one and they disappeared, taking no further notice of me than by giving a short bark. A month after I left, the remains of one were found not far off. I followed a herd of elephants two days, but could not reach them ; and saw plenty of ostriches and giraffe, but never had the luck to kill one of the latter. A man on foot and alone has small chance with such long-legged game.

CHAPTER VII.

Ailat to Kiaquor—Guinea-fowl—Difficulties of the road—Travelling bare-foot—Desert punch—Recipe for picnic bread—A traveller's dinner—Advice as to eating and drinking—The pipe an essential in the East—An ignorant guide—"Shoho" villages—Language of various tribes—Habits of the Shohos—Their hospitality—Their costume contrasted with that of the Abyssinians—Arrival at Kiaquor.

IN the last chapter I prepared my readers for a journey to Kiaquor, to see my sick friend Plowden, and thence perhaps to Adoua, the capital of Tigre. Having little preparation to make, we were afoot the next morning long before the sun was up, and when he arose we were some way advanced on our road, with our backs turned to him. I say we had little preparation to make. Our party consisted of four persons—myself, a countryman as guide, a negro servant of Bell's, called Abdallah, from Sennaar, and an Abyssinian lad who had lately entered my service. The whole of our baggage at starting was a small bag of flour, sufficient for three days' provision, half a pint of honey in a drinking horn; a change of raiment, and my ammunition and arms. Each of us carried his share. The plain which we had to cross before arriving at the hills literally teemed with guinea-fowl, which at that early hour appeared unwilling to quit their roosting-places on the trees; and when, as we approached them, they did condescend to budge, they collected on the ground in coveys of some hundreds each. In not dreading molestation they judged rightly; for, anticipating a continuance of game, we preferred trusting to the chance of killing sufficient for our wants nearer our dining-place, to the inconvenience of carrying them all the morning in the sun. Further on, before ascending the first hill, I passed almost close to seven pigs, which also appeared conscious that they were in no

danger, as they remained quietly feeding within easy shooting distance. The road, as we advanced, became more and more rough, and difficult, till at last we found ourselves ascending and descending almost perpendicular hills, covered with large, round, loose pebbles, and well garnished with the usual proportion of thorny trees, neither of which, as may be imagined, contributed to the comfort of a barefooted pedestrian in one of the hottest climates in the world. I had up to this time so far retained old habits as to wear sandals; but even sandals proved inconvenient on exchanging the sandy plain for the stony hills; for, far from protecting my feet, they were the cause of my getting several ugly knocks, by tripping me up and making me slip; so, following the advice and example of my companions, I took them off and carried them in my hands. Before my feet got well hardened I suffered considerably, though not so much as I expected, for the use of sandals is a good preparation for going barefoot, as a great deal of sand gets between them and the foot. I had also been accustomed to go barefoot in moist and deep sandy places, as well as in the house; and was, therefore, not altogether so new at it as if I had constantly worn shoes and stockings.

We proceeded in this way for nearly two hours, when we arrived at the top of the hill. The country, it must be admitted, had its redeeming qualities; for the scenery, though rough and wild in the extreme, was not devoid of interest. Here the guide gave us the welcome news that water (the first we had met with that was drinkable since our departure from Ailat) was to be found in the valley below us. In order to avoid arriving at the water heated and thirsty, we proposed a halt for a few minutes. My boy, wishing to have especial care of the honey, had taken it from the guide, and was carrying it in his leathern case by a strap round his neck; but now, tired and hot, he threw himself down and spilled it on the ground; forgetting that a wide-mouthed drinking-horn will not carry a fluid like clear honey on a hot day, unless it is kept in a vertical position. Without stopping to speak, we all rushed forward, knocking our heads together

from eagerness, and sucked up the little honey that the greedy sand had left on its surface. "What can't be cured must be endured:" so we made a laughing matter of it, though it was exceedingly vexatious thus to lose our only little luxury, and be reduced to a flour and water diet.

Without more talk we set off at once for the water, which we reached in about a quarter of an hour, and were agreeably surprised on finding a magnificent stream dashing down between two cliffs, which, overhanging it at a few yards only one from the other, shaded its course as it fell from rock to rock in cascades, each of which had, by centuries of perseverance, hollowed out of the hard stone a basin for its waters to repose in. Some of these cavities were very large, and of considerable depth; and some had pretty water-plants growing from their edges, and now in full flower. Could anything be more refreshing than such a sight to a hot and wearied traveller? After resting a short time I bathed in one of these basins; and then, washing out the honey-horn with about a quart of water, and adding thereto a tablespoonful of rum, I presented my companions with a convivial bowl of punch.

Thus refreshed, we continued our march through the same style of country as before. Antelopes, gazelles, baboons, monkeys, and wild boars passed close to us; but, fatigued as we all were, I let them go, rather than add unnecessarily to the people's load. I always hoped we should again meet with some fowl; but at half-past one o'clock, the time of our arrival at the place where we were to halt and dine, we had found none, and we then regretted the gazelle. On being informed that we had arrived at our halting-place, I made the inquiry most natural to a thirsty man—Where is the water? Our guide replied by scraping a hole with his hands in the sand, which soon became half full of a dingy, suspicious-looking aqueous matter, which, however, he assured me would (like many young men in Europe) become more respectable when settled. 'The first thing to be done was to prepare the bread, for we were all hungry: and now, while I describe the way in which it was made, my readers

should lend their attention, and, if found agreeable, make note of it ; for it might happen that at a picnic some fair lady may have a longing for fresh bread, and if you are gallant you may, by this recipe, present it to her in a very short time, hot and smoking from the fire. First, you must of course have flour, of which you take a sufficient quantity : this you mix with water to make a stiff dough, which you knead up well with your hands into balls, each the size and form of a nine-pound shot. Then take a round pebble, heated previously in the fire, and, making a hole in your loaf, poke it in and close the mouth : then, putting the loaf on the embers, you must be careful to turn it about, so that it may not be done more on one side than the other. In about ten minutes it will be baked and ready for eating : so that you will, if hungry and clever, have made, baked, and eaten your bread in not much more than a quarter of an hour, which all will allow to be sufficiently quick. The only fault to find with bread thus made is, that seldom more than the outside and inside surfaces are at all baked.

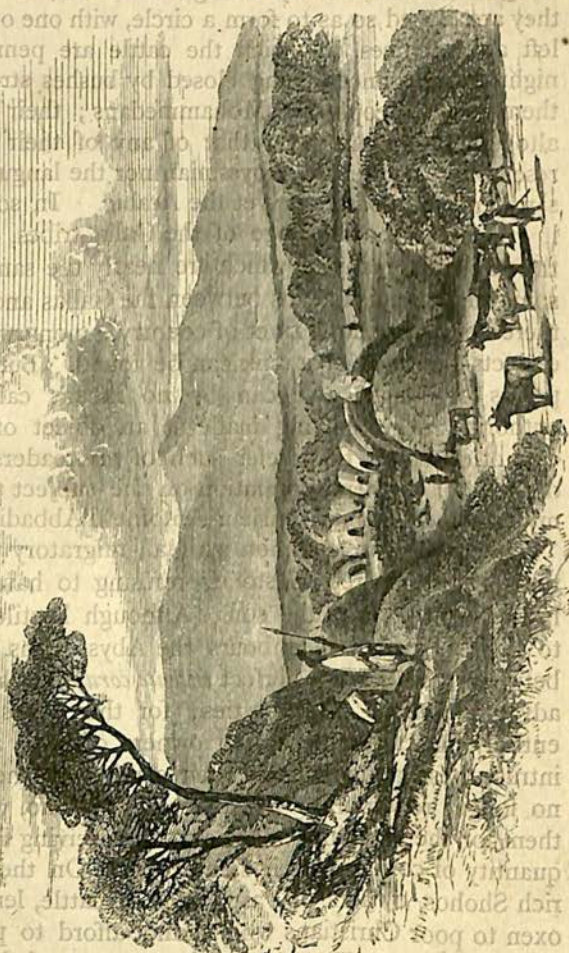
Having thus dined, with no sauce but a good appetite, we reposed for an hour or so till the great heat had abated. Some people may think that bread and water is a hard diet on a journey, but they are much mistaken. A man who knows how to appreciate bread and water may with that simple diet go more comfortably through a hard day's march in a hot climate than if attended by the best cook in England "with all his *batterie de cuisine* ; and for this plain reason, that, though the culinary art may procure him some enjoyment at the half-way halt, yet he will find that such temporary pleasure must be severely paid for in the afternoon's walk ; meats and all other strong food being of too heating a nature. But, if hungry, don't eat your bread greedily, and then wash it down with buckets of water to prevent choking ; sop your bread in the water, and then eat it ; you will thus at once appease your hunger and quench your thirst, without being in danger of strangulation, or of having to carry a few extra pounds' weight of water rattling about in your stomach for the remainder of the day ; above all things, make it an in-

variable rule *always to drink as little water as possible*, remembering that the more you drink the more you will thirst. Another thing almost essential to the comfort of one who has been long in the East is a pipe. Author of 'Wanderings in South America,' well hast thou written ; but on this point thou hast most unquestionably failed : a traveller's pipe is his substitute for food and medicine, the sole companion that can render him calm and patient under suffering, a great preventive against all sorts of infection, and highly useful where malaria is to be feared.

“ Sicuramente un giovine educato
Io non dirò che debba presentarsi
Ad una dama dopo aver fumato
Senza prima la bocca risciaquarsi ;
Ma diavol, costa così poco l' acqua !
E chi è quel porco chi non si risciacqua ? ”

I have gone a whole day under hard fatigue without eating, and yet have not felt hungry. Still I would by no means assert that the pipe satisfied my stomach ; it only diverted my attention, and kept me in good humour ; so while I smoked, my guide and servants fell asleep, and, on finishing my pipe, I joined them in their happy state of oblivion. Having slept nearly an hour, the guide awoke us, and we continued our journey. The road, instead of improving, appeared to grow worse as we advanced ; there was, in fact, no regular road, and our guide did not appear over clever in his calling, for, after frequently climbing a mountain, we found, on a careful inspection of the country, that we had taken a wrong direction, and were obliged to return by the way we had come, and seek another. This was not a little perplexing and vexatious, and my companions expressed loudly their discontent at the guide's want of ability ; and words increasing, I was obliged to interpose my authority to prevent a serious quarrel, especially as we were altogether at the “ Shoho's ” mercy, who was in the country of his own people, while we were all strangers ; and he might at any time have taken us out of our road, and at night decamped, and left us to fish for ourselves. However, about an hour

after sunset we had the pleasure of descending into a little plain among the hills, and of hearing voices of men and the lowing of cattle, and shortly after we arrived in sight of the village fires. It was a "Saho" or "Shoho" camp; for



Shoho Camp.

though these people build themselves huts instead of tents, they in other respects follow the customs of all nomadic tribes, only remaining in one spot as long as there is good

pasture for their cattle, and, when this is eaten up, seeking another.

The villages are composed of huts, formed of straw and boughs of trees, neatly enough fashioned, and thatched; they are placed so as to form a circle, with one or two spaces left as entrances, in which the cattle are penned for the night, the entrances being closed by bushes strewed before them. The people are Mohammedans; their language is altogether different from that of any of their neighbours, resembling neither the Abyssinian nor the language of Mas-sawa and the coast, nor yet the Arabic. In some respects it resembles the language of the Galla tribes, especially in the numerals, many of which are nearly the same. This is somewhat astonishing, as between the Gallas and the Shohos there lies a very large tract of country, among whose several dialects no trace of a link can be found. But as on these points of language I can by no means call myself an authority, never having made it an object of research, I cannot do better than refer such of my readers as may be desirous of further information on the subject to a work by my esteemed friend Monsieur Antoine d'Abbadie.

The Shohos, in common with all migratory tribes, are in their habits entirely pastoral, refusing to have any hand in the cultivation of the soil. Although hostile in religion to their Christian neighbours the Abyssinians, there exists between them a most perfect *entente cordiale*, which is highly advantageous to both parties; for the Abyssinians being entirely agricultural, the rich owners of oxen among them intrust these animals, after their services at the plough are no longer required, to the care of a Shoho, who pastures them for the remainder of the year, receiving in payment a quantity of corn on their safe return. On the other hand, rich Shohos, owners of vast herds of cattle, lend out their oxen to poor Christians who cannot afford to purchase any for themselves. The Abyssinian, owner of the land, has the entire labour and management of the crop, while the Shoho, owner of the oxen, has a share of the harvest.

We were hospitably received by these people, who lent us skins for beds, and provided us with fire-wood, as we preferred the society of the cows outside to that of their



Shohos.

masters' parasites within the huts. Shortly after, the cows being milked, we were supplied with a large bowl of milk for our supper, and, having made our homely repast, were

soon all sound asleep. Next morning, having carefully wrapped up the skins on which we had slept, we started before either the sun or our good hosts had risen. The events of this day were in most respects similar to those of the day preceding, even to our being received in like manner at its close by the inhabitants of another Shoho village. Here, however, the milk, which was supplied to us in large quantities, was highly flavoured with something by no means agreeable, which had been added to prevent its turning sour. We here met Sheikh Suliman, chief of several of the surrounding tribes; he made himself very agreeable to us, but was only distinguishable from his subjects by his carrying a lance and mace, both of which, even to the handles, were entirely iron. On the following day, after crossing a vast plain similar to that of Ailat, and which I was told abounds with elephants at certain seasons of the year, we arrived at about two o'clock in the afternoon at Kiaquor, the first village in this direction belonging to Oubi, nominally Viceroy, but in fact the absolute monarch of Tigre.

We here leave the temporary hut of the migratory Shoho for the more solid but equally rude cabin of the Abyssinian, which is usually built with stones and mud, with a thatched roof, and sometimes plastered inside with mud. The difference of costume is also observable. The tressed hair of the Abyssinian Christian contrasts strangely with the bushy wig of the Shoho, who arranges his woolly hair into two large tufts, one of which is on the top of the head, and the other behind. By way of ornament a pin or scratcher is stuck through the front tuft. A dandy will perhaps wear one eighteen inches long. The Abyssinians wear breeches and large belts, instead of which the Shohos sometimes substitute a kilt of cotton stuff, which falls a little below the knee, or content themselves with the "tobe" or cloth, alone, which in this case is made to answer the double purpose of coat and trousers. Being passed first round the body, so as to cover the lower extremities, the ends are

crossed on the breast and thrown over the shoulders. For convenience it is occasionally tied at the back of the neck.

At Kiaquor I found Mr. Plowden much better, though still in a deplorable state of weakness, and thoroughly sick of a place where he had been detained for so long a period. Thinking that change of air might be beneficial to him, we determined, as soon as possible, to start for Adoua.

CHAPTER VIII.

Start for Adona—Hamasayn—Richness of the soil—Curse of Civil War—Addy Killawila—The quolquol—An escape—Wretched accommodation—Maiya—Shaha—Kouddofelassy—Great inhospitality—Beyt Mariam—A missionary—Addy Hai Hai—Curiosity of the people—A fracas—Abyssinian courage—The Mareb—A storm—Arrival at Adona.

AFTER one night's rest, we prepared for our departure. This journey promised to be more agreeable than the last, —with the serious drawback, however, of poor Plowden's ill health. I was lucky enough to find that he had an extra mule, so that I could spare my legs. We had a good many servants, about eight porters for luggage, and the little variety of provisions which the country could furnish : moreover, we were about to travel on a beaten track through a populous district, in the villages of which we could always renew our supplies, should they fail us. The greater part of our road lay through the fine province of Hamasayn, a vast table-land, varied with beautiful hill and valley scenery. The most careless observer, in passing through this country, cannot fail to mark the extreme richness of the soil, and the great capabilities of the land were it properly cultivated. To us it presented itself under the most disadvantageous circumstances. "Civil war, the perpetual scourge of Abyssinia, and the principal cause of its remaining in its present state of poverty and barbarism, had passed over this fair land, and reduced it to such a state that wherever you turned you saw nothing but devastation and ruin. Whole villages had been burnt to the ground and their lands laid waste by Garra Amlac, son of Aito Sillou, and the Baharnegas Za Géorgis.

Our first halt was at noon, when we rested for a short

time under the shade of a large sycamore, near a ruined village ; and, having refreshed our animals and reinvigorated ourselves with a little bread, honey, and Cayenne pepper, we proceeded for an hour, when the rain coming down heavily we were obliged to take refuge in a house at the village of Addy Killàwita, a small hamlet very prettily situated on rising ground, and surrounded by remarkably picturesque scenery. Here, for the first time, I saw the *quolquol*, a species of *Euphorbia*, which grows like a cactus, the leaves and branches being both of a fleshy substance, and containing a large quantity of milky sap, that flows out plentifully on a sprig being wounded or broken. This milk is poisonous, and is used by the natives for intoxicating the fish in the small rivulets, which being dammed above and below the holes where the fish are known to lie, a quantity of the *quolquol* juice is put into the water, and in a short time the fish are seen to float insensible on its surface. A drop of this poison spirting by accident into a person's eye is said to be sufficient to blind him. It has also a very adhesive, gummy property, on which account the people use it for glueing things together, and likewise for waterproofing a sort of basket made of grass very finely wrought, in which, when *quolquolized*, they carry milk. The trees grow to a considerable height, and bear small blossoms, yellow or pink, according to the kind, which appear along the upper edge of the leaves.

Our road was in some places filled with an exceedingly beautiful insect, in form something like a caterpillar, but shorter and thicker, and covered with a fur-like velvet of the brightest scarlet.

Plowden being taken very ill here, we were obliged to remain quiet till he should feel strong enough to continue his journey ; and so set about to procure a lodging. This point being settled, I started in quest of a supper, and it was not long before I heard the *pintado's* call in a valley a few hundred paces from the village. I had with me my own boy and a servant of Plowden's, who, being considered an able sportsman, was intrusted with a gun. Before de-

scending into the valley I had separated from him, desiring him to take a direction to the right of the spot where we judged the birds to be, while I went to the left. After proceeding about a hundred yards I stood, and consulted with the boy, and was endeavouring to hear the call again, when we were startled by a report in the bushes a few paces to our right, and at the same moment a ball passed immediately over the boy's head, and within an inch or two of my nose. Thinking there might be robbers in the bushes, I cocked my gun and entered them; but finding no one, passed through to the other side, and there was the sportsman coolly reloading his gun! On inquiring why he had taken such a liberty with my nose, he replied that, finding his gun loaded with ball, he had discharged it in order to reload with shot for the fowl; and excused himself for firing in that direction by saying that he imagined we were much farther advanced on our way. As he was a well-disposed fellow, I felt convinced it was an accident; and having cautioned him to be more careful in future, we continued our different routes, and returned in the evening with a very good bag.

Our residence at the village was not of the best, especially for a sick man,—a narrow, small hut, barely high enough for a tall person to stand upright in, with a door about five feet high, the only aperture by which light and air had any chance of entering. In this ill-ventilated apartment were packed the greater part of our company (about eleven men), two mules, and a number of goats belonging to the landlord. The atmosphere was of course none of the purest; but we had no remedy; the rainy season had set in, and we could find no other shelter for our people and animals. So as soon as my companion had recovered a little from his fit of ague, we continued our journey as far as a village called Maiya, about six miles distant, in the hope of finding better accommodation. But it was a vain hope! At first we found none at all; and it was not till after a vast deal of persuasion and great promises that we induced the good people of the village to consent to our occupying a dwelling

for the night ; and when they did so, that which they offered was so bad, so very far inferior even to the last, that, rather than be stifled in a hut, we preferred lying in the open air, covered with hides as a protection from the rain, which kept pouring for several hours. Plowden's continued illness compelled us to remain here two days and nights, during which time we amused ourselves as well as we could, contriving tents and huts among the rocks near the inhospitable village. But soon tiring of this sort of life, we again started, carrying the patient in a litter made of boughs ; and after crossing the river Mareb, which here flows in nearly a southerly direction, we arrived at the village of Shaha, where, our lodging being of the same wretched description, we remained the night only, and continued our journey the next morning, hoping to arrive the same day at Kouddofelassy, where we thought of staying a few days, having heard that it was a market-town, and that all sorts of supplies necessary for my sick friend could be obtained there. We approached it with a feeling that our troubles were about to end, at any rate for a time. Great, however, was our disappointment and vexation on arriving ; for on inquiring in every direction for a lodging, we were absolutely refused one, either for love or money. In vain we pleaded the sickness of our companion, offering a handsome payment for what ought to have been gratuitously provided as common hospitality. All was useless : so we were for a time obliged to put up with the partial shade of a small tree as the only protection against a broiling sun. Presently a crowd of the villagers collected round us, curiously examining us, and making impertinent remarks. We made a sort of tent of the servants' garments ; but this contrivance, though it relieved the invalid from their impertinent curiosity, made him suffer more from the confined air and intolerable heat ; and a severe attack of the fever was the consequence. At last some of the servants, who had been in the village busying themselves in trying to discover some acquaintance or other individual more charitable or less difficult of persuasion than his neighbours, returned, bringing the welcome

news that they had procured us a lodging. It turned out that they had represented us as very great personages on a visit to the king, who was anxiously expecting us, and would no doubt be much angered at any opposition or inhospitality being offered us. A hint had also been added which was conclusive, for they had worked on the man's cupidity by insinuating that he would be well paid for his kindness ; so he now came to us with all pretended humility and good will, politely offering us his house, and regretting that he had only just returned from the deuce knows where (though, as we afterwards heard, he had been seated all the while in his own dwelling), and that his absence had prevented him exercising his hospitality sooner. Too glad to have such a chance, we lost no time in transporting our friend and baggage to the apartment prepared for our reception. It was a miserable shed, carpeted with cow-dung. Here, and often while in these countries, did I yearn for one of the neat, comfortable tenements assigned to cattle in England ; but I may truly assert that for several years I have not slept in half so good a dwelling as most of those occupied by our horned dependants.

We remained five days in this town, during the whole of which time we could procure no supplies beyond a little honey and a few miserable fowls. The morning of our departure advanced us but little on our way ; for almost immediately on starting we were caught by a pelting shower, which compelled us to seek refuge in a village some distance from the road, and situated on a little hill, on which there is a church dedicated to St. Mary, whence the place takes its name Beyt Mariam. The rain falling fast, we entered the first house we came to, the proprietors of which, though at first vehemently objecting to such intrusion, at last came round, seeing that we were determined not to budge. In about an hour and a half the rain cleared off ; but, as there was every appearance of its speedy return, we made up our minds to remain during the night. In the mean time our worthy hosts had discovered that we were not half so bad as they had at first imagined, and were disposed to be very

civil and agreeable. During the intervals of the showers I took various walks in the neighbourhood, partly to procure us a supper, and partly to enjoy the scenery. In one of these rambles I perceived in the road, at some distance from me, a large party, with their faces towards the coast, among whom was a white man. Immediately returning to the village, I inquired who the traveller could possibly be. Some of our people guessed him to be a Greek silversmith; others a Copt, who was leaving the Patriarch and on his way to Egypt; but the more prevalent opinion—and, as it afterwards proved, the correct one—was, that it was an Anglo-German missionary who was returning to Europe, having been rather roughly turned out of the country.

Leaving Enda Mariam next morning, we arrived a little after midday at a large village called Addy Hai Hai. Here we were better received than at any place since we left Kiaquor, for we had been seated only a short time under the shade of a tree when we were invited into the house of a petty chief of the place. The people, however, were curious in the extreme. We had the house filled with a succession of visitors, who, though for the most part very civil, annoyed us considerably by asking all sorts of silly questions, examining everything we possessed, and preventing our taking any rest, or otherwise employing our time as might appear to us most agreeable. One man, however, asked a servant of ours for a pinch of snuff, but in so imperious a manner that the boy refused him; upon this the man insulted him, which was returned with interest. At length words came to blows, when the fellow, seeing himself alone among our people, and fearing he might get the worst of it, made his escape, but quickly returned, bringing with him a crowd of his friends armed with clubs. One of the servants, on seeing them approach, had closed the outer yard gates, which they commenced attacking with sticks and stones. It was the noise caused by this assault that first gave us intimation of the row. Going out, we found ourselves in the middle of a storm of missiles, and the two parties defying and insulting each other, but evidently

neither of them anxious to come to closer quarters. Our servants were not one-tenth as numerous as the others ; but some of them, being armed with guns, kept the stronger party in awe. With much difficulty we succeeded in quieting the fray, by leading our men into the house and disarming them, while the more pacific portion of the mob quieted the remainder. The man who began the fray amused me much. He was a big, powerful fellow, above six feet high, but evidently a great coward, though a blustering bully. During the row he pretended to be most anxious to attack, even after we had in a measure pacified the others ; but a youth of about half his size and weight held him, while he made a show as if frantically struggling to get away and rush at his enemy. I since have frequently seen this done in Abyssinia. Even a woman will often hold a very strong man ; though no doubt, in all these cases, the captive would have been much annoyed had he been taken at his word and let loose. After it was all over, many of those who had five minutes before been drawn up against us in battle array came and chatted with us in the most friendly and sociable manner.

Next day we reached Goundet, situated on the hills that rise from the eastern bank of the Mareb, and on the following day we crossed the river, which makes a turn here, and flows nearly north. It is of considerable breadth, and where we forded it was up to our waists, it being the rainy season, during which period it is very variable—sometimes, after a heavy fall, rising so high in half an hour as entirely to obstruct the road, and falling again as rapidly as it rose ; while in the dry season there is 'barely water enough to wet the ankles. The stream, owing to the rain, was rapid, and of a dark red colour. We had scarcely landed and settled on the opposite bank when the news reached us that Mr. De Jacobis, the Roman Catholic missionary, and Mr. Schimper, a German naturalist, were encamped near us. We found their tent on a hill at a much greater distance than we had imagined, being not far from a village called Haddish Addy (or New Town), which is about three hours'

walk from the river. They received us very kindly; but scarcely had we entered when a storm broke upon us with such fury that it was as much as we could do, servants and all, to prevent the tent being blown away bodily. As it was, it proved of little use to us; for, notwithstanding all our efforts, the violence of the wind, tearing up one side of it, allowed the rain to dash in, and we were all soon completely wet through. In about an hour the storm cleared off, and we continued our route to the village, leaving Mr. De Jacobis and his friend to pursue their journey in the opposite direction. Next day we slept at Baysa, and the following noon, in a heavy shower, arrived in sight of Adoua, the capital of Tigrè.

CHAPTER IX.

Adoua—Appearance of the town—Fashionable amusement—Arrival of baggage—Custom-house annoyance—Start on a visit to Oubi—Detentions on the road—Addy Nefas—Devra Berbery—A very unprotected female—Difficult travelling—A priest's dwelling—"Church property"—Our host's honesty and good nature—Addy Argoud—An uncomfortable night—Mount Haramat—Inaccessible rocks—arrival at the camp.

ON nearing the town I galloped on ahead of the party, anxious to obtain shelter as soon as possible; but being mounted on a weak and tired mule, and the road being of a stiff and greasy clay, and in many places very steep, I gained but little by my haste; for the mule slid down all the hills, and stumbled or tumbled over all the inequalities of the plain. My attention being thus occupied, and the rain driving in my face, I had not leisure to enjoy a distant view of the city we were approaching; nor could I, till within a short distance of it, see enough to enable me to determine whether Adoua was built in the Grecian or Moorish taste. I own I rather expected to see columns or obelisks, if not an acropolis on some of the neighbouring hills. Judge then of my astonishment when, on arriving at this great city, the capital of one of the most powerful kingdoms of Æthiopia, I found nothing but a large straggling village of huts, some flat-roofed, but mostly thatched with straw, and the walls of all of them built of rough stones, laid together with mud, in the rudest possible manner. Being wet, moreover, with the rain, the place presented the most miserably dirty appearance. Before entering the town we had to cross a brook, and to scramble up a steep bank, in ascending which more than one of our party measured his

length in the mud, to the extreme delight of some young gentlemen collected on the top, who laughed and yelled at each successive mishap. This rather annoyed me, espe-



Abyssinian Travelling.

cially as, when I took my turn to rise from the recumbent posture, with my nice white trousers considerably darkened by the dirt collected in this and several previous falls, I was

welcomed by a double allowance of shouting. It was explained to me that I should only get more if I took any notice of it; and I afterwards discovered that it was the fashionable amusement during the rainy season for the young men about town to collect in the vicinity of any slippery place, and, standing there, amuse themselves at the expense of the passers-by. After winding down two or three streets, filled with green mud nearly a foot deep, and barely broad enough to allow a man to pass mounted, we arrived at the house then occupied by Mr. Bell, whom we were glad to find considerably better in health than we had ventured to hope. Right glad also was I to find myself housed, with a prospect of our getting something to eat.

On leaving Ailat I had sent my dragoman to Massawa, with directions to follow me to Adoua with the heavy baggage. Some days after our arrival he made his appearance, bringing with him fifteen porters' loads. The Negadiras, or chief custom-house officer, hoping I should give him a present to hold his tongue, sent to say that he must examine the goods, as he could not believe them to be all mine, but supposed that they probably belonged in part to some merchant who wished to smuggle in his wares under my name. It was in vain that I tried to persuade him that fifteen loads was not much when one had to bring a supply of arms, shot, lead, &c., for two or three years' consumption. I then enumerated the contents of each pack, even the carpets, cloth, &c., which I had brought as presents to the Prince. He still, however, persisted in his wish to examine the whole, which I, considering the proceeding highly unconstitutional, as firmly resisted, determining at the same time to hasten as much as possible our intended visit to Oubi, and to lay the matter before him. We accordingly, a few days after, started in the direction of the camp, then at Howzayn. Our first day's journey did not advance us far on our way, for we had scarcely been an hour on the road, when, while halting in a shady place to rest Plowden (who was still a great sufferer), I was suddenly seized with a

fainting fit, and was in consequence carried into a neighbouring house. My indisposition was of short duration, for in half an hour I was well again, and proposed to proceed on our journey; but my companions, not expecting so sudden a recovery, had begun to prepare dinner. On this account, and because we found the house comfortable and its owner very hospitable, we determined to pass the night there. Early on the following morning we again started, and, after descending the precipitous rock which forms the natural boundary of the province called Dabba Garima, we passed the village of Gaddiba, and finally entered the district called Assa. Here we were obliged to halt in the middle of the road, Plowden's fever having returned very severely, and there being no house within three or four miles; but in a few hours he felt so far better as to enable us to continue our journey, and we succeeded in carrying him to the summit of a hill, on which is situated a village called Addy Nefas (the Village of Wind, so called from its elevated position), where an uncle of one of our servants resided. The road up to it was exceedingly difficult, both from its roughness and steepness; but the fatigue we endured in the ascent was amply repaid by the kindness and hospitality with which we were received on our arrival. Honey, milk, eggs, and various other good things were speedily offered us, and we gladly consented to remain there the night, although we might have gone several miles farther, the day not being nearly closed. Towards the evening of the following day we reached a village of Ha Haily, called Devra Berbery, the people of which, having already suffered great annoyance from the frequent stragglers to and from the camp, were much inclined to treat us inhospitably. At last, after long consultation, they fixed upon the house of a lone old woman (a very unprotected female) as our lodging. She half in her dotage, mistaking us for soldiers or robbers, set up such piercing cries, that the whole population was in a short time about our ears. The matter was soon understood, and the old crone's fears

were in some measure explained away ; but she was still anything but happy, and I felt pity for her, as, remaining near the hut, she kept prowling about on some excuse or other, and (as she thought unobserved) making off with sundry little articles of her property, which she had carefully concealed in holes of the thatch or elsewhere, and then returning for others, talking to herself and sobbing all the while in a most piteous manner. At last I gave her a little present, and taking her by the hand assured her that she had nothing to fear from us, as we were only peaceable travellers, who, far from doing her any wrong, would endeavour to give as little trouble as possible, and be very grateful for our lodging. This comforted her, and she sat down by me and entered into conversation, telling me of all her troubles, how she had lost her children and grandchildren and was left all alone. Of course I could not but sympathise ; and it ended in her getting up and bringing me a little sour milk and some bread as a present ; and during the rest of the evening, although she still appeared to have some misgivings with regard to the servants, she remained near me, and at night brought in all her treasures, and lay down in a corner of the hut behind me, as if to put herself under my protection. Next morning the elders of the village, having, it would appear, formed a better opinion of us than they did on our first arrival, or perhaps fearing we might report ill of them at the camp, accompanied us a short distance on our way, and then, bidding us a good journey, sent two boys to show us the road, as not far onward was a deep gap or ravine, which might be crossed by a foot passenger in a few minutes, while the mules could only arrive by a long *détour*. The path, in fact, which we followed was so steep and slippery down the face of the rock, that we were obliged in some places to slide down in a sitting posture. A little below this was a natural cavern, of such a size that it would have formed a commodious place of shelter for a party of twice our number, mules included : and, indeed, we should have passed the day

there had any water been near at hand ; but, lacking that great necessary of life, we were compelled to proceed, although Plowden's illness rendered travelling very painful to him.

After a short time we arrived at another small hamlet belonging to the same district as the village where we had slept the previous night. While resting here, the attack, which had all the morning been threatening our patient, came on, and we were forced to seek a dwelling-place. To find one, however, was no easy matter, for the only house fit for our accommodation was that of a priest, and he positively refused to give us admittance, as there was Church property in his hut. Ultimately, however, after more than an hour's fatigue and annoyance, during which time our sick friend was lying under a tree, the priest yielded to our threats and promises, and gave us permission to enter, provided the servants remained outside, and that we would abstain from smoking in-doors. The Church treasure, about which so much fuss has been made, consisted of a few old books, one or two small and roughly-made brass crosses, and some scraps of coloured cloth and chintz, which had long since seen their best day. The apartment was very small, and had no aperture for ventilation but the door, which was so low as to oblige one to stoop on entering ; and surely a little tobacco-smoke would have been rather useful than otherwise in fumigating the place, which contained an atmosphere pestilential enough to generate any amount of typhus or cholera. It so happened that a fortnight before, a drover passing that way with cattle had left a fatigued and sickly calf with our worthy host. After a few days the animal died, and the priest was put to a great strait, for he knew not how far his word would be taken by the man on his return. If he kept the skin only, he might be accused of having killed and eaten the animal ; and if he left it outside entire, the birds and beasts would not long allow it to remain in that state. He never thought of calling witnesses ; but what did he do ?

He skinned the calf, and having quartered it, hung it up in his room as a proof to the owner of his veracity ; and we had a far stronger proof than we required of the sweet savour of honesty. The more our host saw of us the more civil he became, and at last he so far waxed friendly as to volunteer his company at our dinner, which was a rather good one of antelope and guinea-fowl. He had been watching the pot during the whole of the time it was on the fire, and we could tell to a nicety how the cooking advanced by the proportionate increase of his good nature and familiarity. He afforded us much amusement during and after dinner, and on taking leave of him I gave him a few yards of muslin as a present for the patron saint, which pleased him vastly. I have no doubt he came to the conclusion that the best purpose to which it could be applied for the saint's service would be in the form of a turban for the saint's servant, as I more than once observed him try it on, and apparently approve the effect it produced on his head. This he did by the aid of a bit of looking-glass stuck in the lid of a halfpenny snuff-box, which one of our party had given him.

Our next day's journey brought us to a small village called Addy Argoud. We found all the inhabitants out at work in the fields, and accordingly, *sans cérémonie*, took possession of one of their dwellings. On their return they appeared much disposed to attempt our forcible ejection, but thought better of it, and in the end were unusually hospitable. Such, indeed, is often the Abyssinian character. They get up a row for the merest trifle, but as soon as it is over they drop all ill feeling ; and it often happens that those who were the most furious enemies become the most sociable and agreeable friends.

We passed a very uncomfortable night. The pouring rain obliged us to sleep in the hut, which we seldom did when the weather permitted us to remain outside. We had managed to procure a stretcher for Plowden ; but Bell and I lay together on the medeb or mud couch, which is in every

house. Scarcely, however, had we begun to think of rest, when the myriads of bugs which crawled over us made us get up again. Having lighted a lamp of the country, a bit of cotton or rag made into a sort of wick, and laid in a clay saucer with some butter, we proceeded to examine the state of the wall and our couch, and found both literally blackened with these disgusting insects, which ran about till the whole place appeared alive. Every crevice was full of them, and we had only to pass the flame along the wall to burn hundreds at a time. Travellers in Abyssinia must of necessity soon become accustomed to the society of these intruders, which infest every man's couch ; and when I, who for a long period had not known what it was to be without them, confess that they entirely prevented my sleeping on the present occasion, I leave my readers to guess that they must have been in rather wonderful profusion. Seeing that all hope of rest inside was vain, we rolled ourselves up in skins, and slept outside in the mud and rain.

On the following day we passed the mountain of Haramat, one of the strongest fortresses in Tigrè, then occupied by a rebel and brigand of the name of Iskyas. A former viceroy (I believe Ras Welda Selassy) is said to have laid siege to the mountain, and, unable to take it by storm, blockaded it for seven years. Mountains almost impregnable by nature are common in this country. Many are in the hands of priests, who have on their summits a monastery and sanctuary, such as Devra Dàmo, and many others ; and to these the people of the neighbouring provinces send their property for safety in times of war or other disturbances. Almost every great chieftain has likewise his mountain, to which he retires in a moment of need. Cisterns, either natural or artificially hollowed, are on the summit of each, and large supplies of provisions are generally kept ready for any emergency. Many of these rocks cannot be ascended except by the aid of cords or rope ladders, which are let down and drawn up at pleasure. Numerous amusing anecdotes are related of the stratagems employed by some of the more power-

ful chiefs to get possession of some of these mountain fastnesses.

Towards the afternoon we arrived, in a heavy shower of rain, at the camp of Howzayn, and proceeded immediately to the dwelling of Bejerundy Càfty, the "Ikkabeyt" or steward of the Prince's household, who was appointed by his Highness as Bell's "balderàbba," or introducer, when he visited this country on a former occasion.

CHAPTER X.

Howzayn—The “balderàbba”—Miserable dwellings—Their construction—Our introduction delayed—Difficulty of procuring food—Visitors—My negro servant claimed as a slave and entrapped—A present—An Abyssinian camp—The Viceroy and his officers—Supplies from Oubi—Drinking-horns.

It is customary for every person, whether native or foreigner, after his first audience with the Prince, to ask for a “balderàbba,” and one of his officers is usually named. He becomes a sort of agent, and expects you to acknowledge, by presents, any service he may render you, such as assisting you out of difficulties in which you may be involved, or procuring for you admission to his master when you may desire it. Càfty was absent on an expedition. His brother, Negousy, was acting for him, and he volunteered to procure us an audience of the Prince without delay. At the same time, as we applied for lodging, he sent with us a soldier from his household to eject some three or four poor fellows from their huts. They were not over-happy at being turned out in the rain; and I really felt for them. A trifling present, however, restored their equanimity at once, and they left their abodes rather pleased than otherwise. We entered them, equally glad to obtain rest and shelter; but in truth, I think I never passed any period of my life more wretchedly than I did the few days at Howzayn. Of the huts, only one had a watertight roof: it was about seven feet in diameter and five and a half high in the highest part. They are very simply constructed, being only a few poles stuck in the ground in a circle, and the heads drawn together and tied in a point. Some slender green boughs are then entwined round them at intervals, like hoops on a barrel, and the

whole is thatched with straw or long grass. Such a hut may be put together in half an hour, should the materials be at hand. As may be imagined, from the dimensions I have given, there was barely room for the three of us to lie down in the one we selected for ourselves, and only just height enough to squat, without the possibility of standing. The other two huts, occupied by our attendants, were larger, but of worse construction. One of them had a roof which had lost more than half its thatch; the other was only thatched half-way up as a screen, but without any pretension whatever to roof. Now, though this was not altogether the most comfortable sort of lodging for a wet day, yet it was but a small and easily endured part of our vexations.

Knowing that it was customary for the King to send food to travellers as soon as he heard of their arrival, we had expected to be treated in a similar manner, and in consequence had brought no provisions with us. We were, however, disappointed in our expectations, and found the greatest difficulty in procuring the necessaries to satisfy our appetites. During the first two days we were much troubled with visitors. Among others, our friend Negousy paid us frequent visits; he was cheerful and familiar, even to playfulness,—would insist on our trying strength with him in various ways, and romping like so many children. He was full of promises too when we explained our circumstances to him,—and said he would do his best to procure us admission to Oubi. He amused us in this way for three days, constantly reiterating his promises, and putting us off with frivolous excuses. We were, however, more than persuaded that he only delayed our introduction, in the hope of our being induced to offer him a handsome present to hasten it. Meanwhile we had little or nothing to eat, either for ourselves or servants. We had been obliged to send a servant round the camp, crying, “Who has got bread for money?”—offering at the same time an exorbitant price; but even by this means we procured not a tenth of the quantity necessary for our party. For a small jar of “*mése*” (honey beer), and a little pot of honey, we were compelled to pay a

dollar, although in reality they could not have been worth more than an eighth of that sum. All our visitors were civil and agreeable. All asked us for presents ; but, although our circumstances were well known, no one, excepting a lady named Senedou, offered us even a bit of bread. We had given her a little essence of cloves, and she in return sent us five cakes and a dish of meat stewed in pepper and butter.

Another circumstance occurred at this time to add to my annoyance. My servant Barnabas, a negro whom I had engaged at Adoua, was claimed as a slave by a man named Lick Ingeder. (*Lick* is an Amhàra title, nearly equivalent to a judge.). Barnabas had been slave to the late Lick Atkou, Ingeder's uncle. At the expressed wish of his master he became free after his death ; but now the deceased man's nephew claimed him, knowing that there were no legal proofs existing of his right to liberty. Even had there been, he well knew that here, as in many other countries, there is little justice shown to a slave to the detriment of his master. Ingeder came to visit us, and on seeing the man he pretended to take no notice of him, but afterwards employed persons to decoy him to his house, under pretence of inviting him to drink ; and when they had got him fairly in, the poor fellow was seized and put in chains.

Lidge Carsai, the third son of Oubi, a lad of nine or ten years of age, paid us several visits. He first asked us for a little snuff, which we gave him ; then for a sword. This we at first refused ; but after many and repeated entreaties I gave him the one I wore,—a long, straight, French cuirassier's, nearly as long as himself. He was very proud of his acquisition ; but it being so long, and he so short, his wearing it was out of the question ; so he had it carried before him by a servant.

The appearance of an Abyssinian permanent camp is singular, but by no means unpleasing. The diversity of tents—some bell-shaped, some square, like an English marquee ; some white, and others of the black woollen stuff made principally in the southern provinces of Tigrè ; huts of all sizes and colours, and their inmates scattered about in groups,

with their horses, mules, &c., form altogether a picturesque and very lively scene. In the centre is the dwelling of Oubi, which consists of three or four large thatched wigwams and a tent, enclosed by a double fence of thorns, at the entrances through which guards are stationed, the space between them being divided into courts, in which the soldiers or other persons craving an audience of the King await his pleasure. Close around this is the encampment of the "Ikkabeyt," or steward, and his "Chiffra," or followers, of whom he has a large body, used as porters in case of the Prince's changing quarters, and as soldiers in time of war. Around these again encamp the "Zeveynia," or guards. In front of these the "Nesteynia," or matchlock men, with the "Negarit," or great drums, while "Fit-Owrraris," or generals of advance guard, occupy the front position of all.

Behind the Prince's tent is the camp of the "Sheff Zagry," or swordbearers, while the "Dejgin," or rear guard, occupies the hindmost position. On each side of the royal abode are the great feudal chiefs of provinces who may have joined their master with their forces. Every corps of about fifty soldiers has an officer called a "Hallika." His hut is rather larger than those of his followers, and is built in the centre, while they encamp in a circle around him. The "Hallika" is generally a favourite servant, whether he be in the employment of the Prince or that of any other chieftain; and when his master is levying fresh soldiers, every volunteer for service demanding a "balderàbba," a favourite servant is named for this office, and in this way his "Chiffra" or company is formed, he becoming "Hallika" to those volunteers to whom he is thus appointed "balderàbba." As "Hallika" he receives and distributes the pay and allowances of his "Chiffra." The only power he has of exercising his superiority over them lies in his right to deduct a small sum from their allowances. Thus in every point the relations of the Abyssinian "Hallika" to his "Chiffra" are much the same as those of the "Boulouk Bashy" of the Turkish irregular infantry to his "Boulouk." This officer is elected by choice of the "Sanjak" (a chief of

four hundred), and deducts a small sum from the pay of his soldiers, with part of which he is expected to give them one meal per diem. The troops in Abyssinia are for the most part collected from among the worst of the people, who prefer idleness in peace and plundering their neighbours in war to the more honest but less exciting occupation of agriculture. They have neither tactics nor discipline, and their dress is the same as the ordinary costume of the country, but usually cut in a somewhat smarter manner.

To continue, however, the description of our tedious visit to Howzayn: on the fourth evening after our arrival we received from Oubi a supply of food for our supper. It consisted of forty thin cakes, thirty being of coarser quality for the servants, and ten of white "teff" for our own consumption. These were accompanied by two pots of a sort of sauce composed of common oil, dried peas, and red pepper, but, it being fast time, there was neither meat nor butter. To wash all down, there was an enormous horn of honey beer. Some of these horns are eight or ten inches across the base, and from two feet to two feet eight inches long: they are from the Sanga oxen described by Salt. I hope future travellers who, on measuring them, may find me incorrect, will not be inclined to accuse me of wilful exaggeration. I give the above admeasurement somewhat under what my memory and the opinion of my Abyssinian servant now with me in England would make it. The advent of these supplies proved to us that Oubi was aware of our arrival, and we fully expected a summons from him without further delay. Another day, however, passed without any invitation, although a fresh supply of provisions was sent us. On the following morning, being the sixth day after our arrival, we were walking out early, when a soldier came running after us to say that we were sent for. Accordingly, not to keep his Highness waiting, we hurried back, and, having prepared ourselves and collected together our presents with as much haste as possible, we set out, attended by Negousy, for the Royal Hovel.

CHAPTER XI.

Visit to Oubi—Native pleasantries on our appearance—Oubi's palace—Ceremonies on introduction—Oubi's state and appearance—Presents—Visit to Weld Inchael—His hospitality—A fight for a lodging—Return to Addy Nefas—My adopted sons—Oubi's generosity—Dispute with the Negadiras resumed—Our reception of his soldiers—He appeals to Oubi—His disappointment—Departure of Plowden—A jealous lover—Practice of the women on appearance of a fight—Affray with the soldiers—A brave warrior—Tranquillity restored—Preparations for visiting Adiobà—Promised perils—Messrs. Plowden and Bell.

WE had to wait a considerable time in the outer court and doorway before his Majesty was pleased to admit us. A crowd of soldiers collected round us, and amused themselves with many facetious remarks on our appearance, such as "Cat's eyes," "Monkey's hair," "What nice red morocco their skin would make for a sword-sheath!" &c. These expressions were afterwards translated to me; for in those days I was not very well up in the "chaff" of the language; and having myself a tolerably good opinion of my appearance, I judged that their remarks must be highly complimentary. I remember, some years after this, asking a person with whom I had become intimate, and who had never seen any white man but myself, what impression my first appearance had made on him. He answered me very simply that I resembled a rather good-looking Abyssinian who had lost his skin. But I must own that our appearance at the time of our first visit to Howzayn was calculated to excite much amusement. We had only recently adopted the Abyssinian costume, and as yet were not altogether well practised in the mode of putting on the cloth. Besides which, our straight hair, not yet long enough to be tressed, was plastered back

with butter, and the faces of those of our party who were encased in a thin skin, which I am happy to say never was my fate, were as red as a fresh capsicum.

At last we entered the great hall of the *magnificent palace* of Oubi. It was a round hut, about thirty feet in diameter, with a large wood fire burning on the floor, which had not even a carpet of grass strewed to hide the dirty face of the original earth. Having been previously instructed, we each of us on entering made a polite but vaguely directed bow. On such occasions the natives usually put their heads to the ground, but, as we were foreigners, such a mark of humility was dispensed with. I have said that our bow was vaguely directed, because in passing from the glare of a tropical sun at noon into a large apartment lighted only by a small door, over which was suspended a curtain, and which communicated with a tent without, it may be imagined that we could not so much as distinguish a single object within. Oubi, in a very patronising tone, asked us how we were. A humble bow was the customary answer. He then desired us to be seated, and we accordingly sat ourselves down on the ground, there being no seat in the hut except the one appropriated for his Highness's throne. My sight was just beginning to accustom itself to the darkness when we received this permission, but my place being directly under the lee of the horrible wood fire, and sitting as I did within a yard of it, I was nearly suffocated, and in a moment my eyes began to stream from the effect of the smoke, which nearly blinded me. I bore it with the utmost fortitude till I could endure it no longer, and then started up with an exclamation something like "Oof!" and my eyes red and pouring with tears, at which Oubi laughed amazingly. Great men, I suppose, require more heat than others in these countries, as I cannot otherwise account for Oubi's taste in having a large fire in the middle of August, especially in a tropical climate.

Oubi was seated, reclining on a stretcher, which was covered with a common Smyrna rug, and furnished with a couple of chintz cushions, from beneath one of which appeared the hilt of a Turkish sabre. We found him a rather

good-looking, slight-made man, of about forty-five years of age, with bushy hair, which was fast turning grey. His physiognomy did not at all prepossess me in his favour. It struck me as indicative of much cunning pride, and falsity; and I judged him to be a man of some talent, but with more of the fox than the lion in his nature. Our presents were brought in covered with cloths, and carried by our servants. They consisted of a Turkey rug, two European light cavalry swords, four pieces of muslin for turbans, and two or three yards of red cloth for a cloak. He examined each article as it was presented to him, making on almost every one some complimentary remark. After having inspected them all he said, "God return it to you," and ordered his steward to give us a cow. On our asking for a "*balderàbba*," he named Negousy, who had already acted for us in that capacity. We then requested permission to retire, which being granted we bowed and took our departure, glad enough to re-enter our huts and prepare for our return to *Àdoua* on the morrow.

Towards evening our promised cow arrived from Oubi—such a cow! as thin as a cat—an absolute bag of bones, which could never have realised anything approaching to two dollars in the market; such as she was, however, she was immediately slaughtered, and before night not an eatable morsel was left.

On the following morning, having sent on our baggage and part of our servants, we paid a visit to old Nebrid Weld Inchaël, or Weldo Michael (son of St. Michael). He is a respectable old gentleman, brother of the celebrated Nebrid Weldo Selassy (son of the Holy Trinity), well known as having more than once distinguished himself in many patriotic rebellions, and who is now in prison. We were received most hospitably by the chief, who insisted on our eating and drinking, although we protested against it, having only just breakfasted, and although he could not join us, it being fast time. Before we left him he gave us a prettily worked bread-basket and cover, made of a sort of grass, dyed of various colours; and sent a servant to accompany us to *Àdoua*, and thence to his house at *Axum*, partly

on his own business, and partly to procure for us a large jar of wine. It was noon when we started, having remained much longer than we intended, and so it was late when we overtook our people, near a hamlet of the same village where we had slept on our journey to the camp. We had to wait some time before they found us a lodging, and even then we had a bit of a fight for it before we went to bed. It would appear that some of the villagers, quarelling among themselves about the quantity of bread each was to furnish for our supper, had complained of it as a hardship, and used insulting language when speaking of us. Their language was excessively gross, and our servants, already provoked at their meanness and want of courtesy, took offence at it, and a quarrel ensued, which, however, after a few blows had been struck, principally on the shields of either party, was put an end to without any serious mischief.

The next day's journey brought us to Addy Nefas, accomplishing in one day what in coming had taken us three days; the kind reception we had previously met with there having induced us to prefer continuing our journey long after night-fall to halting at some strange or inhospitable village. It was near midnight when we arrived in straggling parties, having lost our way more than once, and after meeting with many adventures in the dark, such as tumbling into bogs and holes, &c. On the following morning, having started alone to see that our house was made ready for our reception, I arrived at Adoua about 9 A.M., the rest of the party coming in at noon.

I may here remark, that since this first visit I have been to Howzayn and other camps, but never in the same uncomfortable way, for when I became, *pro tem.*, an Abyssinian I had many friends; even two of Oubi's household (though both of them much older than myself) became my adopted sons "(tout-lidge)." * My plan was to go straight

* "Tout-lidge" means literally "son of the breast." If a man wishes to be adopted as the son of one of superior station or influence, he takes his hand, and sucking one of his fingers declares himself to be his "child by adoption;" and his new father is bound to assist him as far as he can.

to the hut of an acquaintance, and share with him and his horse and servant, their bed and supper.

During our visit to Oubi we told him of the pretensions of the Negadiras to examine my baggage, and asked him his wishes on the subject. He answered that from the days of Ras Michael, Ras Welda Selassy, and Dejatch Sabagardis (former princes), the baggage of no European traveller had ever been examined, or made liable to pay duty; and far be it from him to establish any precedent that should make him appear less great or generous than his predecessors. (I must say that, considering the cow he gave us in return for our presents, this savoured rather of the smoke than of the roast.) He also sent a servant with us to bear the same message to the Negadiras. Immediately after our arrival we opened the question; the servant swore that such and such had been the decision of his master, but the Negadiras was deaf even to this, and persisted that we had bribed the man to swear falsely. He moreover treated us roughly, sending his son with a number of soldiers, who, contrary to all usage, entered very abruptly into our house: they came, as they said, to reason with us, though their object was evidently to frighten us into compliance. They were, however, deterred from incivility by the sight of a formidable array of fourteen guns, double and single, which we had been cleaning, and had placed against the wall. We afterwards heard that the cunning old fellow had sent the soldiers with orders to bind us and take us into custody; so we took the liberty of telling his son, when he came the next day, that if such were his father's intentions he had better come himself, and that we would take care to give him and his people a warm reception. The old man, however, was not to be satisfied; his dignity was offended, because I had not attempted to conciliate him with a present on my first arrival; so, seeing that force and intimidation were of no avail, he sent rich presents to Oubi, which the prince graciously accepted, returning the same answer as before. The Negadiras, though disappointed, and no doubt extremely vexed at the loss of his presents without profit,

still refused to allow the matter to rest, but sent us to say that we must swear before a priest that we had passed no contraband goods. We answered, that if a Christian priest (the Negadiras was a Mohammedan) came to our house we should have no objection to take the required oath, but that we certainly should not go anywhere for that purpose. The priest never came, and so the matter ended. About a year afterwards I made acquaintance with the Negadiras; I had then gained some little reputation in the country, and he was very humble, apologizing for his past conduct, and pleading that he did not then know what sort of person I was. It ended in our becoming good friends.

Shortly after this time Plowden left us to go to Axum for change of air, Bell and I remaining at Adoua to put our things in order, that we might be in readiness to proceed on our travels as soon as he should return. Nothing worthy of note occurred to us during this interval, except a little encounter with the soldiery, which was near leading to serious consequences. One of our servants (quite a lad) was in the house of a female relation, when a soldier, her lover, seeing him there, and not knowing who he was, became jealous, and, determining on revenge, went out to collect some of his companions to assist him. A woman outside, hearing their plans, hastened to tell the boy and his cousin; and they, by way of precaution, immediately closed the door, thinking that even for a parley it were as well to have something between them and the soldiers. On their arrival, the boy endeavoured to prove to the enraged lover that he had no cause for jealousy; but all to no purpose. The soldiers threatened to burst in the door if admission were not granted them. The news reached our house very quickly, as does all such intelligence in Adoua; for the moment there is the least appearance of a fight, the women of the neighbourhood, mounting to the house-tops, scream out "Mr. So-and-so, son of Mr. So-and-so, is killed," long before a blow has been struck. In a moment his friends assemble; and thus a struggle frequently ensues, where, had the neighbours been silent, nothing would have come of it.

On hearing of the plight of the unlucky couple, two of our servants went out to endeavour to explain the matter; but the soldiers, it appeared, had been drinking, and were not at all disposed to listen to reason. They received the peace-makers with every kind of insult. This was followed by blows; upon which, as they had gone unarmed, our men hurried back to the house for their weapons. Seeing what was going on, we joined them, in order if possible to prevent anything serious occurring; refraining, however, from openly taking arms with us, lest it should appear that we had come with hostile intentions. Somehow or other the enemy had got news of our approach almost before we had passed our own gates; for we had gone only a short distance, when, turning the corner in front of the church of Medhainy Allem, we were met by about thirty of them, coming down upon us full tilt with their lances poised and shields on guard. I happened to be walking a little in advance of our party, and so sudden and unexpected was their attack, that I had only just time to put aside the foremost man's spear and close with him. He was a little light-made man, and was much encumbered with his lance and shield; so that I had not the least difficulty in holding him quiet, and at the same time keeping off his comrades with a pistol, which I had previously kept concealed under my clothes. I was rather amused at the little man, who kept calling out to me in a half-angry, half-entreating tone—"Let me go: let me go!" Bell had hitherto succeeded in preventing an actual collision between the remainder of the parties; but this appeared not likely to last, as the soldiers kept vociferating—"The Copts (meaning us) are upon us with their guns!"—and many were congregating to their assistance. At this juncture it luckily happened that two priests came up, and by their timely interference put a stop to the proceedings. The boy who had been the cause of all the disturbance was taken by the authorities, tried, and honourably acquitted; all parties became great friends; and many of the soldiers called on us. The one I had held in the scuffle, afterwards becoming intimate with me, said he should not have cared

so much, only that I squeezed his left arm against his shield, and sadly deranged his hair, which had just been newly tressed.

Shortly after this Plowden returned from Axum, and he and Bell set out on a tour to visit Mr. Coffin, at Antichaou, while I prepared for a journey into Addy Abo, a province on the northern frontier of Tigre, then so little known as not to be placed on any map. My principal object in going there was for shooting, and if possible to learn something of the neighbouring Barea or Shangalla,—a race totally unknown except by the reputation they have gained in many throat-cutting visits paid to the Abyssinians. Except for such motives the nations have not been on visiting terms for many generations. I was told much of the dangers I was to meet with from the climate and the people, and that the only two Europeans who had ever been there had died. My curiosity, however, was raised, and I felt that I could trust to my own prudence not to expose myself to any unnecessary danger. I have, moreover, always found that, of the perils described to a traveller before he undertakes a journey, not more than half need be believed.

CHAPTER XII.

Start for Addy Abo—Buildings on the road—Features of the country—The Abyssinian hornbill—Axum—Remnants of former civilization—The obelisk and sycamore—The town tank—The High Priest's invitation—A distant relation—Native wine and spirits—Facilities for grape-culture—Meagre vintage—Primitive stills—Dwellings—Their construction.

I STARTED for Addy Abo, towards the end of September, 1843, accompanied only by a few native servants. On leaving Adoua, the westward-bound traveller, after half an hour's ride, passes the little church of St. John (Beyt Yohannes), a mere hut, perched on a small pyramidal hill, or heap of stones, on whose barren sides grow a few scattered bushes, principally of the quolquol, of which I have already spoken. An undulating road, abounding in picturesque scenery, especially from those points which command distant views of the hills beyond Adoua, leads to the church dedicated to the Saviour (Enda Yessous). This building, little superior in architectural beauty to the last mentioned, may be considered as half-way between the ancient and modern capitals of this part of Abyssinia, Axum being anciently considered the capital, while Adoua rose to importance from a mere village of huts so lately as the reign of Ras Michael (about sixty years ago). The princes who succeeded him increased its size, and built for themselves a house, a sort of palace compared to the ordinary huts; but Oubi, from the situation not agreeing with his health, or from fear of poison, never resides there, preferring his camp, and the house has in consequence been allowed to fall into ruin. Enda Yessous is built on a small but well-wooded hill, on the verge of the splendid plain of Hatzabo, which extends nearly all the way to Axum, a dis-

stance of several miles. It is famed for its fertility, producing remarkably fine white teff, the species of corn most esteemed in this country. Near the church, but at some distance from the road, is a spring of delicious water.

From the plain may be seen some of the mountains of Simyen, which, though at a great distance, form a pleasing boundary, relieving the eye from the continued flatness of the foreground. As you approach Axum, a range of small hills rises on the right hand abruptly from the road. On the rocky summit of one of these, at a short hour's distance from the town, is the church of St. Pantaloon (Abouna Mentellin), a saint formerly held in great esteem by the people, and therefore much attended and rich; but of late years—as apparently there is a fashion in these as in all other matters—he has been much neglected, and consequently, becoming very poor, is only waited upon by one or two monks, who subsist on the charity of the few devotees that still attend the shrine of their old-fashioned patron.

Near this place we saw a number of the “Abba Goumba” (Buzaros Abassinicus), or Abyssinian hornbill, a quaint-looking bird, nearly the size of a turkey. It is black, the wings only containing a few white feathers. The beak is thick, rather long, and curved downwards, while over it, and attached to it, protrudes a hornlike substance, the front of which is hollow, and the edges rough, as if broken. The bird's throat is furnished with red and blue wattles, like a turkey-cock, and the sides of the beak with a pair of black moustachios, which would do credit to a hussar. The feet also are not unlike the turkey's. I broke the wing of one of these birds with a rifle-ball. Unable to fly, he took to his heels, and afforded us a good run of an hour, when he went to cover in some bushes, out of which, however, we soon started him; but he had become weak from fatigue and loss of blood, and, after a short chase, one of the servants, coming up to him, cut off his head with a sword, and so spoilt the specimen. The head, however, I kept, and was not long in procuring another entire skin.

The road skirts the foot of the hills for a considerable

distance, till at last a small plain obelisk, on the right hand, and farther on, to the left, a large stone tablet inscribed in Greek characters, proclaim to the traveller his near approach to the city of Axum. From the tablet a sharp turn to the



Male Abba Geumba. (Buzaros Abassinicus.)

right brings him in view of half the town, which, being situated in an amphitheatre of hills, and possessing a tolerably well-built square church, probably of Portuguese construction, forms altogether a rather agreeable *coup d'œil*.

The church is prettily situated among large trees, and surrounded by rustic but neatly-built huts. From the tablet, however, to the church there is a distance of several hundred yards, along which lie scattered, every here and there, unfinished or broken columns, pedestals, and other remnants of the civilization of former ages. The remaining part of the town, with the beautiful obelisk and splendid sycamore-tree, at last come in view, having been hidden by the projecting foot of one of the hills. The obelisk and tree are both of great height, but the latter is remarkable for the extraordinary circumference of its trunk and the great spread of its branches, which cast their dark shade over such a space of ground as would be sufficient for the camp of the largest caravan. The principal obelisk is carved on the south side, as if to represent a door, windows, cornices, &c. ; while under the protecting arms of the venerable tree stand five or six smaller ones, without ornament, most of which have considerably deviated from the perpendicular. Altogether they form a very interesting family party.

To the east of the column and town is a large reservoir, supplied by a stream which pours down from the hills during the rainy season, and for some time after, till it has drained them of the superfluous water they may have collected during the three wet months ; but when this is finished and the dry season commences, it discontinues its supply. The tank, however, which, with some wells on the other side of the town, furnishes the inhabitants with water, holds out nearly the whole year. I would often have gladly plunged into it when coming fatigued and hot from the road, but, as it is set apart for drinking, a penalty is very properly inflicted on any one washing clothes or bathing in it.

We halted under the tree while a servant went in search of lodgings for us. He speedily returned, bringing us an invitation to the house of Cashy Agavaz (High Priest) Obsàbius. We were welcomed by the holy man and his wife, a merry, good-natured old lady of fifty, who claimed a sort of relationship with me, on account of her great-grandfather having been a Greek. She was generous with

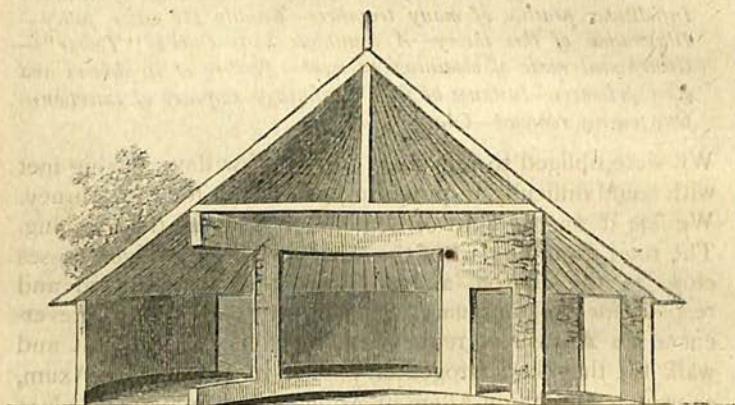
her supplies of food, and in a few minutes we found ourselves comfortably housed, with our masticative organs at work, and a small supply of wine and spirits to finish off with. These spirits are of an inferior kind, distilled from the refuse of the wine or from honey, which latter article is commonly used for that purpose in Adoua and various parts of Tigrè, though the quantity of spirits consumed is very inconsiderable.

The grape is very little cultivated in this country, although, from the nature of the climate and soil, it might succeed admirably. Here and there a few detached plants produce just enough to satisfy an observer as to the capability of the land ; but only at Axum, in Tigrè, and at a village in Dembea, are they grown in sufficient quantities for making wine. The vintage of Axum altogether would not amount to the quantity made by the poorest peasant in the south of France, as only one or two persons attempt it ; the Cashy Agavaz's wife is the principal wine-maker, and she cannot turn out more than fifty or sixty quarts a year, if so much. The wine, too, is of a very inferior quality, and leaves a dark stain on anything it may be spilt upon.

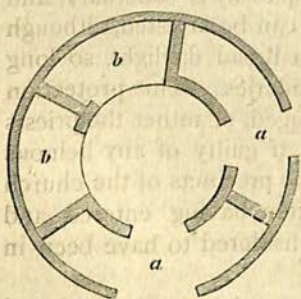
The stills they use for their spirits are of most primitive construction, consisting of two earthen jars with a piece of hollow cane by way of a spout. The grape is called "wainy," the wine "wain tedge," names which evidently mark their European origin ; and were no doubt introduced by the Portuguese.

The better houses of Axum are round, the form, in all probability, used by the grandees of the country previous to the introduction of the square ones of Adoua, which appear to me to be a modern innovation, possibly from the Europeans also, as almost all the churches built by natives are round ; while Axum, Kosquam, and others built by the Portuguese, are square. Circular Abyssinian dwellings are of various descriptions, from the little wicker and straw gojjo (a wigwam) to the large and commodious huts used by rich men, and often to be met with in Axum and Adoua. These latter may be from 20 to 30 feet in diameter,

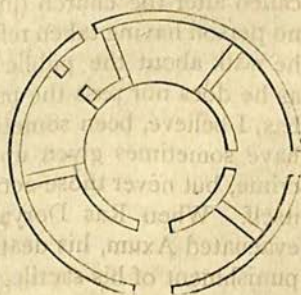
and by a clever contrivance are often divided off so as to form several rooms. This is done by an inner wall being raised at a distance of about 5 feet from the outer one and parallel to it. The passage between them is then divided by cross walls, so as to form two medebs (or mud benches for sleeping on, *b b*), and on either side of the entrances (*a a*) are left spaces, one of which might be used for grinding corn, another as kitchen and bakehouse, and the others for store-rooms. The residence of a rich man may generally be known by the number of jars for beer, mead, corn, &c., which these last contain.



The Section here given is supposed to pass through one of the "medebs," and give a view of the other one and the side door.



Plan.



Plan.

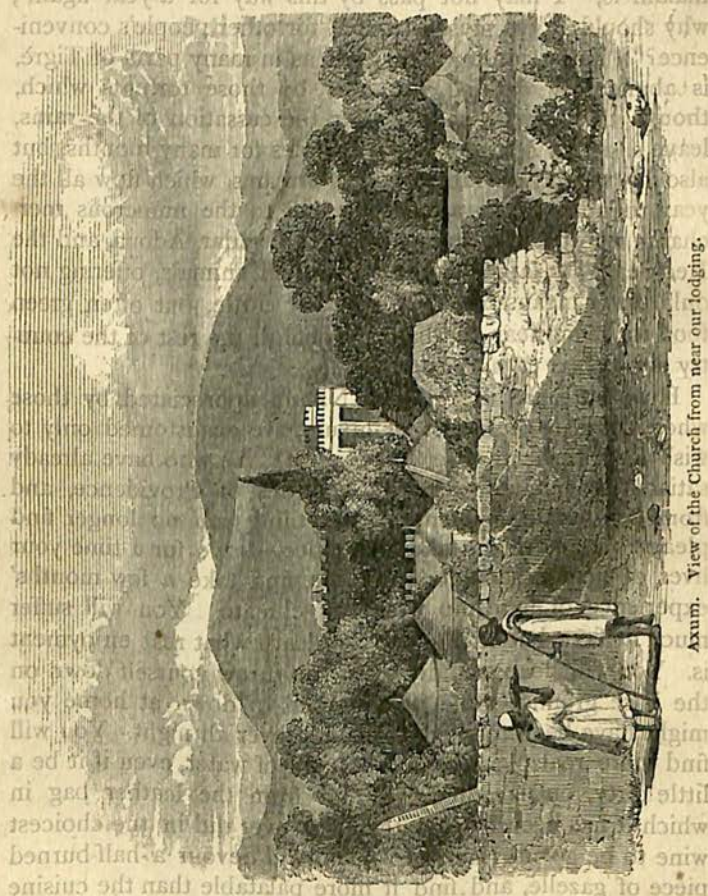
CHAPTER XIII.

Departure from Axum—Sanctuaries—Abyssinian roads—A native traveller's maxim—The gifts of Nature not appreciated till needed—Advice to the satiated—Appearance of the country—The Village of Wind—Injudicious practice of many travellers—Civility the better policy—Illustration of this theory—A bounteous host—Oubi's "Teskar"—Government mode of obtaining payment—Torture of its debtors and other prisoners—Instance of Oubi's cunning—Impolicy of extortion—Our journey resumed—Change of scenery.

WE were obliged to remain at Axum a few days, having met with some difficulty in procuring provisions for the journey. We left it on the 23rd of September, early in the morning. The road from the part of the village where we lodged passes close to the church, and we were told that custom and respect for the sanctuary, which is one of the most revered in Abyssinia, required all persons to dismount and walk till they had altogether passed its precincts. Axum, as well as Medhainy Allem at Adoua, is a sanctuary or place of refuge, not only the church, but also a limited part of the town, being "guddam." At Adoua the whole of that part called after the church (in fact the parish) is sanctuary, and no person having taken refuge there can be arrested, although he walk about the public streets in broad daylight, so long as he does not pass the parish boundaries. This protection has, I believe, been sometimes infringed, or rather the priests have sometimes given up refugees, if guilty of any heinous crime, but never those actually in the precincts of the church itself. When Ras Dorya died, after having entered and evacuated Axum, his death was considered to have been in punishment of his sacrilege.

For some distance after passing the church, we continued

in the great Gondar road. This appellation may give an idea of macadamizing, with footpaths, milestones, fences, &c.; but here the high road is only a track worn by use, and a little



Axum. View of the Church from near our lodging.

larger than the sheep-paths, from the fact of more feet passing over it. The utmost labour bestowed on any road in this country is when some traveller, vexed with a thorn that may happen to scratch his face, draws his sword and cuts off the spray. Even this is rarely done, and I have been astonished

at seeing many highways, even some of those most used, rendered almost impassable by the number of thorns which are allowed to remain spread across them. An Abyssinian's maxim is, "I may not pass by this way for a year again; why should I give myself trouble for other people's convenience?" The road, however, here, as in many parts of Tigrè, is abundantly watered, not only by those torrents which, though they dry up shortly after the cessation of the rains, leave a supply of water in rocky holes for many months, but also by several tolerably copious streams, which flow all the year round. These are most useful to the numerous merchants who pass constantly between Gondar, Adoua, and the Red Sea, with large caravans of laden animals, offering not only ready means for watering their cattle, but often green food for them near the banks, when all the rest of the country is parched up and dry.

How little are the gifts of Nature appreciated by those who, living in the midst of luxury, are accustomed only to wish for a thing in order to obtain it! Ye who have already satiated yourselves with the bounties of Providence, and from constant enjoyment of everything can no longer find pleasure in anything, take my advice—leave for a time your lives of luxury, shoulder your rifle, and take a few months' experience of hardship in a hot climate. You will suffer much at first, but in the end will learn what real enjoyment is. You will sleep soundly when you throw yourself down on the bare ground, while in your bed of down at home you might have been tossing about in a fever all night. You will find more real pleasure in a draught of water, even if it be a little dirty, or flavoured with tar from the leather bag in which it has been carried, than you ever did in the choicest wine to be got in England. You will devour a half-burned piece of gazelle, and find it more palatable than the cuisine of the greatest gourmand in Paris. And as for fruit, it is true we have none to speak of in Abyssinia, but a good raw onion is not a bad thing by way of luncheon. Shade, a bit of green grass, even coarse though it be, a rippling stream, a cloud—all these are treasures in Africa, though not cared

for or heeded in a land where you have trees in every hedge-row, a velvet turf in every garden and in many fields, a river almost every three or four miles, and, as for clouds, perhaps rather too many of them.

The Gova-Dirra and Mai-Shūt together fall into the Mai-Tchaou and Werrey, and thence into the Taccazy, whither also flow the Mai-Shūm and Dábba Bourrou, after having united their waters: these are good-sized rivulets, and all crossed our road.

As for the appearance of the country, it is in general hilly and tolerably well wooded, but much varied in feature. Sometimes you are climbing or descending a hillock, and at others pursuing your way down a shady valley or along the level summit of some table-land. We once lost the track, to the great annoyance of the poor inhabitants of a nearly deserted village, among whose corn-fields we wandered for nearly two hours, till some one coming to order us off was obliged at least to show us which way we were to go in order to obey him. Following his directions we regained the road, not much more than a mile from the place we had left it. A little by-path leading from it up the hill-side indicated a village in that direction, and, as evening was near, we ascended till it brought us to a hamlet, so snugly placed among the hills as to be almost out of sight of the road. It was another Addy Nēfas, or the Village of Wind, from its elevated position, and belongs to the district or parish of Aghabserai, in the province of Maitowaro.

The inhabitants of the principal house to which I had directed my steps were yet out at work in the fields; so I quietly sat down under a large tree and smoked a pipe, till a very respectable but warm-looking gentleman, followed by three or four younger ones, his sons or dependants, passed me as they went into the house, with their agricultural implements, &c., on their shoulders. On passing, the senior of the party made a low bow and wished me good evening. I thought their going straight in and saying nothing, rather unpolite; but still this was excusable, as no doubt they were much fatigued, and must have their supper before

they could attend to us. However, I was not long left in suspense. Immediately on their entry there was a great bustle and moving of skins and other articles of furniture. Meanwhile one of the boys who had gone in with the others came out again, bringing me a large bowl of new milk to drink; and before I had well begun my second turn, after each of my servants had had his, the respectable-looking man made his appearance, still more respectable than before, but not so warm-looking, for he had taken off the dirty breeches and sheepskin in which he had been working, and was now bedecked in a clean white quarry or sheet, with red border. He politely ushered me into the house. The bustle we had heard had been occasioned by their placing skins, a couch, &c., in the best hut, and removing some corn-jars and other utensils which had formerly occupied it. Having himself arranged the couch for me, he seated me on it, and then going out brought us a good supply of provisions, serving me with his own hands, and putting into my mouth the very supper which no doubt was intended for himself; nor could I even induce him to sit down with me, although he must have been very hungry. He also gave us abundance of milk, and corn for the animals, excusing himself for what he called scant hospitality by saying that the poverty of the times and his late losses had rendered it out of his power to receive a stranger of distinction as he would otherwise have wished to do, or even as he always had done before the late oppression had ruined him. Nor was this an excuse made up for the occasion, as I had afterwards reason to know.

At the last great levy of taxes, called Oubi's "teskar," the greater part of the people had run away from their villages. In such cases the "chickka," or petty chiefs of villages, become responsible for the payment of the whole sum due by the fugitives. Our good landlord, Temmenou, was thus rendered liable for sixteen "tchàn" or "intalams" of corn, each of eight "madigas." This, if measured with the "Àdoua," or ordinary measure, might be worth at the time about 60 dollars; but on this occasion the "Gual Ourai," a measure more than double the "Àdoua," was used; nay, I believe,

invented for the purpose. Sixty dollars (or 12*l.*) is a large sum for an Abyssinian farmer; but double that amount almost reduced our poor friend to bankruptcy. He was obliged to sell his horse, mule, and several plough-oxen to meet the amount; and even now, part was unpaid, and he was living in perpetual fear of a visit from the soldiers of Oubi.

The Abyssinians have no sheriffs' officers, sponging-houses, Queen's Benches, or Courts through which insolvent debtors may pass and get "whitewashed." When a man owes money to the Government a band of soldiers are sent to feed on him till he pays what is due. They treat him brutally as a matter of course, and oblige him to provide them with the most expensive luxuries, such as butter, honey (of which they make mead), the finest bread, when probably none is to be met with in the neighbourhood; and all these in ridiculously large quantities, wasting what they cannot consume. This treatment of course in no way tends to assist the man in collecting money to pay his debt. Thus, if he cannot borrow, he is generally reduced to utter ruin; and then who knows or cares what may become of him?

They have a plan of extortion rather ingenious, but horribly cruel. The debtor is put in prison and chained by the arm. The iron which is placed round his wrist is not clasped, but is merely a strong hoop, opened by force to allow the hand to enter, and then hammered tight between two stones. At first it is only made tight enough to prevent any possibility of the prisoner's escape. After some time, however, if the sum required be not forthcoming, it is knocked a little tighter, and so by degrees till the hand dies, the nails drop out, and the poor prisoner is at best maimed for life. Death sometimes ensues from this treatment, as in the following case.

When our countryman Coffin got into ill favour with Oubi, and thought himself safer at the coast than in his power, his son John was taken and put on a mountain with the iron on his hand, as I have described. He remained tortured for some time, losing first his hand, then his eyesight, and at last he died from the treatment.

Hence it will be seen that this species of torture, which in principle nearly resembles the "boot" of olden times in England, is not only applied for extortion in money matters, but to effect any purpose that the employer of it may desire from his prisoner, as in the case of John Coffin it was used in the hope of inducing his father's return. I must however say, that I have only heard of rare instances of this torture being adopted, especially under Oubi's authority. I believe I am right in my statement as regards John Coffin's death. I was at Adoua at the time, and such was the report I heard all over the country, and such the account I wrote at the time to his father.

But to return to Temmenou and the taxation. The cause of his being called Oubi's "teskar" is an amusing instance of that gentleman's cunning, and may at the same time serve to show the despotism exercised by some of the Princes of Abyssinia over their subjects. Oubi was, or pretended to be, lying dangerously ill at Howzayn; on which account admittance to his presence was granted to no one but his chosen attendants. This continuing a long time, a report arose in the camp, and was quickly circulated throughout the country, that he was dead, and that his death was kept a secret till some one should be chosen to succeed him, lest the people of Tigrè should rise in the moment of confusion and throw off the yoke of the Simyen family, while they were disputing among themselves who was to succeed the deceased. The report no doubt had its origin from Oubi himself;—a trick to try the people, and then plunder them. Certainly they were not to blame in the matter, for the story took rise first among his soldiers. However, at the very moment when all were congratulating themselves on his death, and no doubt many plans were forming for a revolt, one day Oubi appeared in his tent, looking in rather better health than usual; and a proclamation was beaten in all the principal markets, something to this effect:—"Oubi says, 'I am well; thank God. But since my good people have thought fit to make me dead and buried, it is but just that they should provide me a

teskar.' " * Then followed the terms of the contribution to be levied. This tax fell on all Tigrè, but the part we were now in was perhaps one of the least able to support it. The whole of this north-western part of Tigrè, from the Taccazy to the Mareb, and from Axum to the Shangalla country, is governed by Lemma, Oûbi's eldest son. He is young and foolish, and, forgetting that the more he takes this year the less he will have for the next,—in fact, acting altogether on the plan of the old woman with the goose that laid golden eggs,—he has, by pillaging the peasantry to enrich his brutal soldiery, entirely ruined the country.

The above comparison is not at all inapplicable to the case. Shiré, once the richest and most productive province of Tigrè, and still capable of becoming so under a prudent government, might indeed have laid golden eggs for a wise ruler. Now the land is nearly deserted. Where once were populous villages with their markets and a happy and thriving people, the traveller now sees but a few wretched huts, vast tracts of fertile land lying uncultivated, and, of the few inhabitants that remain, many that were formerly owners of several yoke of oxen each, are now to be found clubbing together to cultivate just enough corn to pay their taxes and keep themselves and their families from starvation.

In the evening I took a stroll, which was prolonged considerably beyond what I had intended by the wild beauty of the neighbouring scenery and by three wild boars that I found feeding in some of the villagers' corn-fields, and which, apparently conscious that they deserved punishment for the trespass they were committing, never allowed me to approach them, though they led me a wild-geese chase, or rather a wild-boar chase, of two or three hours' duration, when getting tired of it I returned very late to my hospitable quarters. Next morning, having parted with Temmenou, who had insisted on accompanying us some distance to set us right on our way, we resumed our route.

* Teskar is a sort of funeral feast, where charities are bestowed on the poor and the priests.

Near the village I found a great quantity of large round pebbles, which, on being broken, were hollow, and lined with an incrustation of beautiful amethyst-coloured crystals, some nearly an inch long.

After leaving the lovely plain of Mai-Towàro, the road passes for some distance through a hilly and rocky tract of country, winding through woods of acacias and other shrubs, and at one part running along the brink of an almost precipitous ravine. A few torrents,—at this season of the year still containing a little water, but soon to become dry courses, till the next rains replenish them—and a hamlet or two, were passed before we arrived at the stream of Tam-būkh, which borders the plain of Solekhlekha. What a different style of scenery was that now before us from that which we had just left!—the one a vast plain, apparently fertile, but altogether uncultivated; the other a wild, barren mass of forest and rocks. The change was, as it were, from one country to another, quite differing from it in every feature, and yet without any gradation. One foot might have been in the Alps while the other was in a gentleman's park in England.

At this point we halted for a short time to rest the porters. We were about to leave the road to Gondar, which runs west, while that which we were to follow takes a northerly direction.

CHAPTER XIV.

Botany and ornithology—Unhealthy valleys—Beauties of the plain—Monkeys—Their employments—The Cynocephali—Tactics on their forays—Leaders and scouts—Sagacity—Dwellings—The leopard their greatest enemy—Formidable antagonists—Sometimes attack women—Their cleverness not entirely dependent on instinct—Anecdote—Instance of attachment—Powers of mimicry—Mode of capturing them—The showman's story—Ingenuous kite-catching—A curious remedy—A caution to mothers—Mai Quollow—Politeness of the chief—His household.

It can hardly be expected that I could find much to interest me in a vast open plain like the one we were crossing. A botanist would no doubt have met with much to occupy his attention in that branch of natural history, for there was to all appearance a great variety of flowers growing in the grass; among them a kind of scarlet aloe, which is to be met with almost everywhere in Tigre, and appears, like our gorse, to flower at all seasons, forming a pretty object in the foreground. The many varieties of mimosas too, with their different-coloured flowers—pink, yellow, and white—appear to be spread over the whole face of the country, whether rock or plain, hill or valley. When in blossom many of them emit a fragrance so powerful as to render the whole neighbourhood more odorous than a perfumer's shop. The jessamine is seen in profusion in many parts, but principally on the hills; and there is also a beautiful parasitical creeper (an *æschynanthus*), which grows like the mistletoe from the bark of other trees, with bright dark-green fleshy leaves and brilliant scarlet flowers.

I shot a few birds—some plantain-eaters and whidahs at Aghabsarei, and a few hawks and others on the plain; but in Abyssinia the “quollas” or deep valleys are the best

places for natural history of all kinds. One must, however, be cautious not to descend into them at an unfavourable time, as in so doing there is great risk of being carried off by the fevers which prevail at some seasons of the year, and which are always highly dangerous, often fatal.

About half-way across the plain runs a beautiful stream, which, coming down from the hills to the westward of Maidemas, crosses the road, forming many pretty cascades and eddies with the large stones that occupy its bed, and, dashing onward, falls into a deep ravine, or crack in the plain, whence at length it joins the Mareb. On the north side of the stream are two copses or plantations, one close to the bank, the other about a hundred yards from it, but both growing so regularly, and the different trees so well distributed for effect of mass and colour, that you might easily deceive yourself into the idea of the whole scene being carefully arranged by some landscape-gardener of exquisite taste. Had it really been so, he could not have chosen a prettier spot, or one where his labour would have been more profitably bestowed, than at the half-way halt on the wide and monotonous waste we were crossing. From the vicinity of water the grass round these plantations was bright green, unlike the dry hay of the plain; and this formed no slight addition to its merits in the eyes both of the mules and of their masters.

The ravine down which the brook fell was well wooded, and the trees were filled with the "tota" or "waag," a beautiful little greenish-grey monkey, with black face and white whiskers. I followed a troop of them for a long time, while the porters and servants were resting—not at all with the intention of hurting them, but merely for the pleasure of watching their movements. If you go tolerably carefully towards them they will allow you to approach very near, and you will be much amused with their goings-on, which differ but little from those of the large no-tailed monkeys, "Beni Adam." You may see them quarrelling, making love, mothers taking care of their children, combing their hair, nursing and suckling them; and the passions—jealousy,

anger, love—as fully and distinctly marked as in men. They have a language as distinct to them as ours is; and their *women* are as noisy and fond of disputation as any fish-fag in Billingsgate.

The monkeys, especially the Cynocephali, who are astonishingly clever fellows, have their chiefs, whom they obey implicitly, and a regular system of tactics in war, pillaging expeditions, robbing corn-fields, &c. These monkey-forays are managed with the utmost regularity and precaution. A tribe, coming down to feed from their village on the mountain (usually a cleft in the face of some cliff), brings with it all its members, male and female, old and young. Some, the elders of the tribe, distinguishable by the quantity of mane which covers their shoulders, like a lion's, take the lead, peering cautiously over each precipice before they descend, and climbing to the top of every rock or stone which may afford them a better view of the road before them. Others have their posts as scouts on the flanks or rear; and all fulfil their duties with the utmost vigilance, calling out at times, apparently to keep order among the motley pack which forms the main body, or to give notice of the approach of any real or imagined danger. Their tones of voice on these occasions are so distinctly varied, that a person much accustomed to watch their movements will at length fancy—and perhaps with some truth—that he can understand their signals.

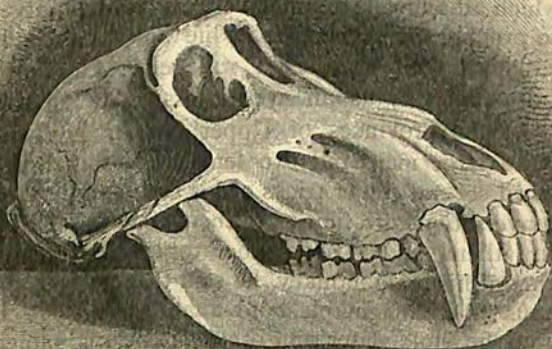
The main body is composed of females, inexperienced males, and the young people of the tribe. Those of the females who have small children carry them on their back. Unlike the dignified march of the leaders, the rabble go along in a most disorderly manner, trotting on and chattering, without taking the least heed of anything, apparently confiding in the vigilance of their scouts. Here a few of the youth linger behind to pick the berries off some tree, but not long, for the rear-guard coming up forces them to regain their places. There a matron pauses for a moment to suckle her offspring, and, not to lose time, dresses its hair while it is taking its meal. Another younger lady, probably excited by jealousy

or by some sneering look or word, pulls an ugly mouth at her neighbour, and then, uttering a shrill squeal highly expressive of rage, vindictively snatches at her rival's leg or tail with her hand, and gives her perhaps a bite in the hind quarters. This provokes a retort, and a most unladylike quarrel ensues, till a loud bark of command from one of the chiefs calls them to order. A single cry of alarm makes them all halt and remain on the *qui vive*, till another bark in a different tone reassures them, and they then proceed on their march.

Arrived at the corn-fields, the scouts take their position on the eminences all round, while the remainder of the tribe collect provision with the utmost expedition, filling their cheek-pouches as full as they can hold, and then tucking the heads of corn under their armpits. Now, unless there be a partition of the collected spoil, how do the scouts feed?—for I have watched them several times, and never observed them to quit for a moment their post of duty till it was time for the tribe to return, or till some indication of danger induced them to take to flight. They show also the same sagacity in searching for water, discovering at once the places where it is most readily found in the sand, and then digging for it with their hands just as men would, relieving one another in the work if the quantity of sand to be removed be considerable.

Their dwellings are usually chosen in clefts of rocks, so as to protect them from the rain, and always placed so high that they are inaccessible to most other animals. The leopard is their worst enemy, for, being nearly as good a climber as they, he sometimes attacks them, and then there is a tremendous uproar. I remember one night, when out-lying on the frontier, being disturbed in my sleep by the most awful noises I ever heard—at least they appeared as such, exaggerated by my dreams. I started up, thinking it was an attack of the negroes, but I soon recognised the voices of my baboon friends from the mountain above. On my return home I related the fact to the natives, who told me that a leopard was probably the cause of all this panic.

I am not aware how he succeeds among them. The people say that he sometimes manages to steal a young one, and make off, but that he seldom ventures to attack a full-grown ape. He would doubtless find such a one an awkward customer; for the ape's great strength and activity, and the powerful canine teeth with which he is furnished, would render him a formidable enemy, were he, from desperation,



Skull of the Dog-faced Baboon (*Hamadryadus Cynocephalus*).

forced to stand and defend his life. It is most fortunate that their courage is only sufficiently great to induce them to act on the defensive. This indeed they only do against a man when driven to it by fear: otherwise they generally prefer prudence to valour. Had their combativeness been proportioned to their physical powers, coming as they do in bodies of two or three hundred, it would be impossible for the natives to go out of the village except in parties, and armed; and, instead of little boys, regiments

of armed men would be required to guard the corn-fields.

I have, however, frequently seen them turn on dogs, and have heard of their attacking women whom they may have accidentally met alone in the roads or woods. On one occasion I was told of a woman who was so grievously maltreated by them, that, although she was succoured by the opportune arrival of some passers-by, she died a few days after, from the fright and ill-treatment she had undergone.

To show that their cleverness depends in some measure upon powers of reflection, and not entirely on that instinct with which all animals are endowed, and which serves them only to procure the necessities of life and to defend themselves against their enemies, I will relate an anecdote to which I can testify as an eye-witness. At 'Khartūm, the capital of the provinces of Upper Nubia, I saw a man showing a large male and two females of this breed, who performed several clever tricks at his command. I entered into conversation with him as to their sagacity, the mode of teaching them, and various other topics relating to them. Speaking of his male monkey, he said that he was the most dexterous thief imaginable, and that every time he was exhibited, he stole dates and other provisions sufficient for his food for the day. In proof of this he begged me to watch him for a few minutes. I did so, and presently the keeper led him to a spot near a date-seller, who was sitting on the ground with his basket beside him. Here his master put him through his evolutions; and, although I could perceive that the monkey had an eye to the fruit, yet so completely did he disguise his intentions, that no careless observer would have noticed it. He did not at first appear to care about approaching the basket; but gradually brought himself nearer and nearer, till at last he got quite close to its owner. In the middle of one of his feats he suddenly started up from the ground on which he was lying stretched like a corpse, and, uttering a cry as of pain or rage, fixed his eyes full at the face of the date-seller, and then, without moving the rest of his body, stole as many dates as he could

hold in one of his hind hands. (Apes are not *quadrupeds*, but *quadrumana*.) The date-man being stared out of countenance, and his attention diverted by this extraordinary movement, knew nothing about the theft till a bystander told him of it, and then he joined heartily in the laugh that was raised against him. The monkey, having very adroitly popped the fruit into his cheek-pouches, had moved off a few yards, the crowd following him, when a boy pulled him sharply by the tail. Conscience-stricken, he fancied that it had been done in revenge by the date-seller whom he had robbed; and so, passing close by the true offender and between the legs of one or two others in the circle, he fell on the unfortunate fruiterer, and would no doubt have bitten him severely but for the interference of his master, who came to the rescue.

I have never thought it worth while to teach monkeys of my own any tricks, always preferring to watch their natural actions. I had in Abyssinia a young one of the same breed as the last mentioned. From the first day she was given to me her attachment was remarkable, and nothing would induce her to leave me at any time; in fact her affection was sometimes ludicrously annoying. As she grew up she became more sedate, and was less afraid of being left alone. She would sit and watch whatever I did, with an expression of great intelligence; and the moment I turned my back she would endeavour to imitate what I had been doing. Mr. Rodatz, master of the German brig "Alf," coming up the country for a cargo of animals for Mauritius, gave me a copy of 'Peter Simple,' the first English book, beside the Bible and Nautical Almanac, that I had seen for more than two years. As soon as I was alone I of course sat down and began greedily to feast on its contents, though I had read it several times before leaving England. "Lemdy" was as usual seated by my side, at times looking quietly at me, occasionally catching a fly, or, jumping on my shoulder, endeavouring to pick out the blue marks tattooed there. At last I got up to light a pipe, and on my return found she had taken my seat with the book on her knee, and with a

grave expression of countenance was turning over the leaves page by page, as she had observed me to do—with the difference only that, not being able to read their contents, she turned one after the other as quickly as possible, and that, from her arms being short, and she not yet much used to books, she tore each page from the top nearly to the bottom. She had completed the destruction of half the volume before I returned. During my momentary absences she would often take up my pipe and hold it to her mouth till I came back, when she would restore it to me with the utmost politeness.

* These monkeys are caught in various ways. One plan adopted by the Arabs of Tàka has struck me as the most simple, and at the same time as likely to succeed as any other. Large jars of the common country beer, sweetened with dates, and drugged with the juice of the “òscher” (*Asclepias arborea*), are left near the places where they come to drink. The monkeys, pleased with the sweetness of the liquor, drink largely of it, and, soon falling asleep, are taken up senseless by the Arabs, who have been watching from a distance.

To conclude this subject, I must return to my friend the showman at 'Khartûm, although in so doing I advance more than three years on my original story. I became very intimate with him and his monkeys—so much so that I travelled with them for some days, acting as his assistant, my duty being to keep the ring, which I did by gracefully swinging round me two wooden balls covered with red cloth, and fastened, one at each end, to a rope similarly ornamented; and occasionally to assist the monkeys in collecting coppers. I passed a very agreeable time with him, and he told me many anecdotes of monkeys, as well as the usual tales of ghouls, fire-worshippers, &c.; for which all Egyptians, especially of his erratic habits, are celebrated.

One of his stories has occurred to me rather *à propos* of our subject, which may amuse some of my juvenile readers, and at the same time show what a high opinion the Arabs

have of a monkey's intellectual powers. My friend the "bahluàn" assured me that he believed it. A friend of his, a very credible man, one who prayed and fasted, had told him the story, and he believed it on his account, as well as from his own experience of the sagacity of these animals. The story began as usual with a most beautiful palace in a most beautiful city, belonging to a most wise and just king, who had a most beautiful daughter, and a most cunning but wicked wizir. Nearly all Arab stories begin something after this fashion, but I remember no more of that part of the story, than that the king had ordered the wizir to be cast into prison, and that he was sitting smoking at a window looking into the great square before his palace, probably thinking whom he should choose to succeed his disgraced minister. It so happened that a monkey-man, fatigued by his day's work, seated himself with his monkey in the square exactly under the window where the king was smoking, and, having lighted a fire, prepared food wherewith to refresh himself. While the pot was yet boiling he heard the muezzin's

" clear warning voice,
" Which issued round the neighbouring minaret ;"

and, like a good Mussulman, rose immediately to perform his ablutions previous to prayer. Before going he consigned the cookery to the care of the monkey, who, it appears, among his other accomplishments, had been taught to mind that the meat was not over-done, and that the pot did not boil over ; accordingly, when his master was gone, he sat down by the fire, and employed his leisure time in investigating the contents of his fur, trying to pick up bits of red-hot embers, and burning his fingers in the attempt, rubbing them on the ground for a few minutes, and then burning them again, and such like innocent and agreeable diversions. After some time, thinking that the fowl which was boiling must be nearly cooked, he lifted up the lid and tasted it ; finding it very good, he soon tasted it again, and so on, till at last he had eaten it all up. He did not

become aware of this grievous consummation till, on searching for a bit more, he found nothing but bones and broth, and then, what a fright he was in ! Picturing to himself the just rage of his master on his return, he moaned and chattered and scratched his sides, first with one hand and then the other, rubbed his fingers on the ground, and did a good many other little tricks which frightened monkeys are apt to do, till at last, most sagely reflecting that none of these expedients would get him out of his scrape or fill the pot, he set his brains to work to discover some method of effecting this. He watched with a longing eye a number of kites that were soaring over his head, but how was he to catch one ? At last a happy thought struck him, and he chuckled with delight.

Nature has provided these animals with two pink pads behind, on which to seat themselves, and it occurred to him that their resemblance to raw meat might assist him in entrapping one of the hungry birds ; so, having rolled himself in the dust and ashes till his fur was quite white, he put himself in the posture which a little boy would take just before turning a summerset—that is, with his head on the ground ; and in this position, he looked exactly like a heap of dust, with a lump of raw meat on the top on it. Two or three kites soon approached, circling round and round, till at last one bolder than the rest pounced at the supposed meat, and was immediately seized by the delighted monkey by its wing, and, notwithstanding all its struggles, pecks, and scratches, was poked alive, feathers and all, into the boiling broth.

The Sultan had been watching the monkey all the while from his window, and no doubt it was he who told the tale to some one who repeated it to my friend's veracious friend, but I have forgotten the conclusion of it. Any one, however, who has heard an Arab tell a story will guess that it was something to the purport that the master on his return would have whipped the monkey, had not the Sultan prevented him, and given orders for a bath and change of raiment for both, desiring them to tell their adventures ;

then in all probability the just and wise monarch ordered his cunning and wicked wizr to lose his head, and made one or other of our friends (man or monkey), or both of them, wizr in his place, and then married one or other, or both of them, to his most beautiful daughter, and at last, at his death, one or other, or both of them, succeeded to his kingdom, and was or were blessed with twelve male children, and enjoyed happiness twenty-four degrees, and reigned, beloved and respected by everybody, sixty years and seventy mornings.

I might cite many more anecdotes of the intelligence of these animals, both from personal observation and stories I have heard; did I not conceive that they have already taken up sufficient of my time as well as my reader's. Meanwhile the porters and baggage have advanced a good distance on the road, and it may be as well to rejoin them.

I seldom rode, preferring always to walk, except after meals, or when the country was dull and uninteresting, and then I generally managed to doze on my saddle. That day, after luncheon, I was riding along half asleep, enjoying my pipe and the warmth of the mid-day sun, when Saïd pointed out to me, in a field at a short distance off, a wild sow and her four little pigs feeding. Having but little meat in our provision, we thought this an opportunity of stocking our larder, which ought not to be neglected, and so started in pursuit of them. This is about the only time I have ever seen a wild pig out feeding at so unusual an hour; these were evidently aware of their indiscretion, and kept strict guard; for although we made our approach with the utmost caution, they perceived us, and it was not till after a long pursuit and many circuitous advances, that aided by a ravine down which we crawled, we succeeded in getting within shot of them. I killed the sow, and Saïd shot a silly porker that came running directly towards us. Some soldiers had followed us from the road; and as soon as the sow fell, one of them ran up to her, and, piercing her neck with his lance, greedily drank the blood which poured out. On my inquiring the motive of such an extraordinary pro-

ceeding, he told me that the blood and flesh of the pig were considered as a cure for a disagreeable malady with which he was troubled ; although I doubted its efficacy, I gave him and his companions part of the meat also, reserving a leg and the porker for our own consumption.

This idea of the flesh and blood of swine being medicinal is, I have since found, common in Abyssinia. The only cause I can suggest for its origin is, that possibly some of the natives may have seen Europeans in former times using the lard for making mercurial ointment ; and thus, getting hold of the wrong end of the story, may have imagined it to have been the medicinal part of the compound.

Towards evening we arrived at a pretty little hamlet called Mai Quollon ; the brook from which it takes its name (the Child's Water) flows close by, forming a cascade, not far from the houses, picturesque, but not at all on a large scale ; indeed, I am not aware of any large waterfalls in this part of Africa—even the far-famed cataracts of the Nile are little better than rapids.

Seeing no one about, I sat down under a tree, but had scarcely done so when the chief of the village came out, with his cloth lowered so as to leave his shoulders bare—a sign of the greatest respect and humility—and with more than European politeness upbraided me for not having entered his house at once. He conducted me to his best hut, whenoe he had ejected his wife and family, and, after seeing me comfortably settled, brought me a goat and some beer ; and nothing that I could say would induce him to sit down, or to desist from serving me with his own hands. He had never before seen a European, nor even heard talk of white men, excepting the Greek silversmiths at Adoua, so that it could have been from no hope of reward that he behaved thus liberally. Rain coming on towards night, I begged him to return with his family to the hut I occupied, the only waterproof one of the lot ; it was with difficulty I induced him to do so, and, even when he did comply, it was with many apologies for the intrusion. Before we went to

sleep he got more at ease, after having discussed the greater part of a large jar of beer, and it ended by not only himself, wife, and four children joining me in the hut, but also two donkeys, a lot of goats (which were kind enough to jump on to my couch, and every now and then to run about me in the most frisky manner), and a whole tribe of fowls, a large proportion of which roosted exactly over my head.

CHAPTER XV.

*A rough road—Necessity of travelling barefoot—Fertility of the district—
A war of wit—Annoyances of the soldiery—Addàro—The secretary-
bird—Curiosity of the people—Fate of a party of French travellers.*

PART of our next day's journey was disagreeably rough. The road in many places reminded me of the ascent or descent of the pyramids of Gizeh, but was even more difficult, being literally a staircase, formed by enormous blocks of stone, with often a depth of four feet or more between each step. Had I been shod, instead of being barefoot, it would have been scarcely possible for me in many places to have reached the bottom without a fall. It was not till then that I thoroughly understood why the Abyssinians in general never wear shoes, and why those few who have borrowed from their neighbours on the Red Sea the custom of wearing sandals, should only use them in town, and immediately take them off when going on a journey. The fact is, that, in a country abounding in rocks as this does, it would be dangerous to attempt to pass many places except barefoot; and it is moreover by far the most comfortable way of walking. I went four years barefoot, and must now confess that the compassion I used to feel for a beggar who had no shoes is much diminished, since I have come to know by experience that it is by far more comfortable to go without them after very short practice.

I was at first much astonished at the activity with which the mules and asses hopped up and down some of these places; but they, too, like their masters, and even the horses, are never troubled with shoes. In many places, also, where the road was a little smoother, it was so completely interwoven with thorns that, notwithstanding all my servants'

assiduity in running before my mule, some with their swords cutting away the boughs, others warding them off with their shields, I found it impossible to ride. Long before we arrived at our destination I had scarcely a rag left to my back or a square inch of whole skin to my body.

Semema is a fertile district, being watered by a stream of some size, which, running with a considerable fall, is profitably used by the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages for irrigation, its waters being carried over the land at different levels. These artificial aids, little practised elsewhere in Tigrè, cause the naturally fertile soil to produce not only a great quantity, but also all the varieties of the vegetables known in the country.

Close by, on a hill, is the camp, formerly occupied by Lemma, but now by his Belladt Inkata Obsàbius. A number of soldiers were busy washing their clothes at the brook for the coming feast of Mascal. As we passed they could not refrain from giving us many would-be witticisms at our expense. Strange to say, the Abyssinians quiz not only the whites about their colour, but also the blacks; in fact, every one who is not of their own *café-au-lait* mixture. At Howzayn, as I before said, we whites were the object of their satire, while, on this occasion, my dragoman Saïd, who was a black from Kordofan, was politely requested to jump, if possible, over the stream, lest he should turn it into ink by putting his foot into it.

Farther on we met several parties of soldiers joining the camp from Addy Àbo, whither we were bound, and where they had been stationed for some time past. Heartily glad were we to see them leaving the place, for there is no pleasure in living in the same village with them. Not only do they annoy you with their begging visits and other intrusions, but they are also often the cause of reducing you to the borders of starvation; for, from fear of them, the peasantry will neither bring any produce to the market, nor even sell it in their own houses. Oubi does not permit such conduct when he hears of it; but in these out-of-the-way places, Lemma's soldiery, trusting to their distance from

him, act nearly as they please. When, however, complaints have reached Oubi's ears, the offenders have been severely punished.

During the day we passed the villages of Addy Abaio and Hamlo, and rather late in the evening arrived at Mai Sourrou. Near each of these villages flows a stream. That of Hamlo is very beautiful, not only from the abundance of water it contains, but also from the picturesque way in which it winds among the trees and rocks which shadow its bed. At Mai Sourrou we had a warm dispute with the villagers, because it being dark we had mistaken our way and got in among their corn-fields. On reaching the houses, however, which were at some distance from the scene of our quarrel, we found to our astonishment one of the very men who had been foremost in the matter waiting our arrival at the entrance of the village to conduct us to his own house, he having taken a short cut and arrived before us. He received us with the utmost kindness, and treated us throughout with great hospitality.

Next day, on our way to Addàro, we were met by a large party, apparently the train of some wealthy man, coming in the opposite direction. On inquiring who he might be, I was informed that he was a Mussulman of the name of Hajji Amàn, a man of great note for his wealth and respectability, and reputed of a most amiable disposition. This character appeared to me so favourable and rare that I thought I could not do better than cultivate his acquaintance. So I rode up to him, and, after the usual interchange of civilities, inquired where he was going. He replied, "To the camp, on business of importance;" at the same time putting me a similar question. Having answered him, I asked his advice about the best means I could take for procuring a lodging on my arrival; to which he replied by sending a servant back with me, with instructions to prepare one of his houses for me, by turning out the women and donkeys who then occupied it. An hour or two after leaving him we came in sight of the village, which is divided into three portions, each one a short distance from

the other. The place was formerly celebrated for its size and the importance of its market ; but is now reduced to poverty, and almost deserted. In the neighbourhood are a few pyramidal hills, which present a singular appearance, rising as they do abruptly out of the plain.

Before arriving at the village we had to cross a large marsh, with a brook flowing through it. There I saw for the first time the secretary-bird. He is called "Farras Seytan," or the Devil's Horse, from the astonishing swiftness with which he runs : but in this part of Tigre he goes as commonly by the name of "Selassa Izn," or Thirty Ears, from the crest of feathers with which his head is ornamented. By naturalists this bird is classed among the vultures on account of his bill and claws, which, indeed, considerably resemble those of that family. He is undoubtedly of the Raptores ; but as far as I have been able to observe, the extreme difference of his habits from theirs would scarcely allow him to be considered as belonging to the family Vulture. The secretaries live almost entirely on reptiles, which they kill for themselves ; while the vultures for the most part feed on carrion.

On arriving at the town all the inhabitants collected to have a look at me, and even after I was fairly in the house many came peeping in at the door, though they dared not enter, from awe of the great men who were sitting with me. The children especially came running in, and, after taking one hurried but fixed stare, bolted out again, half frightened, half laughing. Many of the people had never seen a white man before, as, with the exception of two French gentlemen, Messrs. Dillon and Petit, who passed through some years ago on their way to the Mareb, no European had ever visited this place. These two gentlemen, both medical men, came here for the sake of natural history, and foolishly, not attending to the advice of the natives, descended to the Mareb at the unhealthy season of the year ; that is, immediately after the rains. They remained only eight or nine days, during which time nearly the whole of the party was attacked by the fever. Mr. Dillon died before he had

left the place three days on his way back. Several servants shared his fate. Nearly all suffered ; though some of the natives and Mr. Petit recovered. His recovery, however, availed him but little : after lying in a state of balance between life and death for more than eleven months, he was, soon after his recovery, carried off by a crocodile in the Abbai or Nile of Gojam—picked out by the voracious animal from the colour of his skin while swimming between two guides. Of the servants who survived, one Bairou, whose portrait is given in Mr. Lefevre's work, was afterwards in my service. He had never recovered the shock of the fever, being always a sickly, delicate boy. He died shortly after my leaving the country. Thus, of a party of five Frenchmen who were travelling together, only one (Mr. Lefevre) ever had the good fortune to return to Europe. Mr. Vignon, as I before said, died at Jedda ; and Mr. Schœffner, of dysentery, at Antichau.

CHAPTER XVI.

Aito Merratch, Chief of Addy Àbo—Notes of my stay at Addàro—Blessing of a swarm of bees—Visitors—Reputation of Europeans for coining—Welda Georgis—His knowledge of fire-arms—Inducements to remain at Addàro—Start for Rohabaita—A bargain—A long staircase.

DURING my stay at Addàro I was treated with the utmost kindness and civility by the inhabitants, more especially by their chief, Aito Merratch. He is chief of the whole province of Addy Àbo. His father was the same before him, and a very great man in his way, having considerable influence in the country, not only from his position, but also on account of his wealth. In these countries, however, rich men rarely thrive; partly because when they become so they turn ambitious, and partly because their wealth renders them objects of envy to others. Thus Oubi, or the Devil, as Merratch expressed it, worked the ruin of our worthy friend. His father, Aito Welda Selassy, left him well off; but before he was fourteen years of age he was thrown into prison and despoiled of his property, owing, I believe, to the intrigues of some of his own people, especially one man, whom his father had raised to consideration from the lowest grade. After many years' confinement, Merratch managed to return to favour, and his government has been lately restored to him, but not his property.

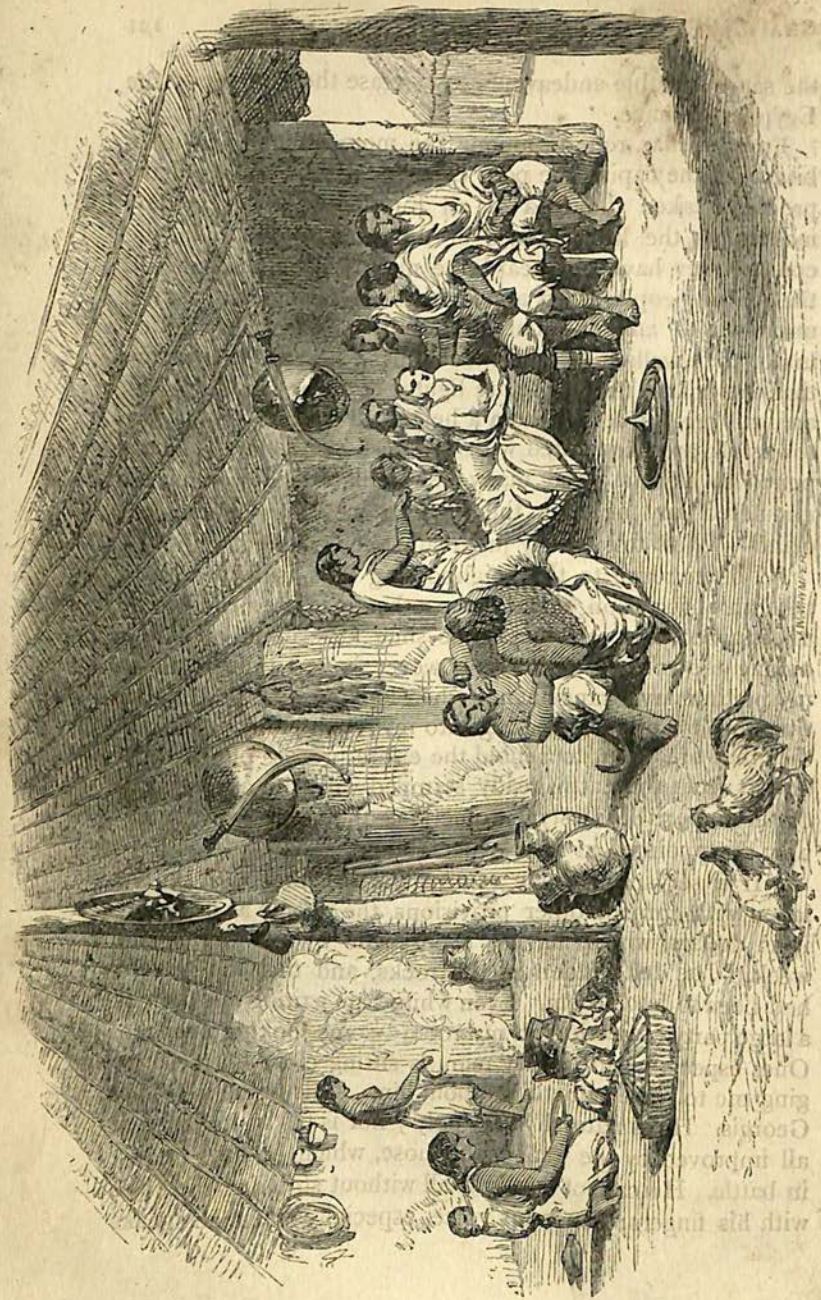
During the remainder of my stay at Addàro my notes partook much of the style of a game-book. As regards other matters I find such remarks as the following:—

“Continually bothered by visitors: really their civility waxeth disagreeable. A party of soldiers still here, appear to relieve one another in watching over me; for as fast as one lot goes, another comes to take its place. They are

always polite; but it seems to me that their politeness can scarcely be called disinterested, as it mostly ends in their insinuating that a present of some sort or other would be acceptable," &c. And then—"Blessed with a swarm of bees that have lodged in the house. They have stung me several times, but I can bear that, especially as they have also stung some of my importunate visitors, who by this means are kept away. In fact, the only method I have to rid myself of my friends is to stir up the bees—to rid myself of the bees I am obliged to stir up the fire, which is kept burning all day for the cooking; but by the time the bees are gone the heat is intolerable. Fancy a roaring fire and lots of smoke at noon in one of the hottest places in Abyssinia!"

"Visitors, eternal visitors! Here is a specimen of their usual conversation:—First a good stare, then an unmeaning smile, then 'How do you do?' *An.* 'God be thanked.'—Then, in an under-tone, 'Curious!' Then, *Qu.* 'Is there any rain in your country?' *An.* 'No.'—*Qu.* 'Is there any grass?' *An.* 'No.'—*Qu.* 'Corn.' *An.* 'No.'—*Qu.* 'Are there cattle?' *An.* 'No.'—*Qu.* 'Then what do you eat?' *An.* 'Air.' At this answer they stare a little, and one or two laugh. Some of the wiser, understanding the joke, take it as such; but the others go away persuaded that we have plenty of dollars but no corn, and that, like the sons of Jacob, we are come to their land of plenty for food."

"If I take a walk I am always followed by one or two of the most curious, who come with the pretext of showing me where I shall find game, but in reality to watch my proceedings. They have an idea that I, in common with all of my colour, am possessed of the secret of obtaining or making dollars anywhere by magic. This idea had doubtless its origin in the fact of an Armenian resident in Adoua having been suspected of coining dollars. Many counterfeit ones are in circulation in the country, and report in the city attributes their origin to him." I fear too with some truth; for since I left Abyssinia I heard at Khartoum that he had escaped from Cairo and taken refuge in those distant lands to avoid the punishment he was likely to incur, having been detected in



"Visitors, eternal Visitors." Interior of a Country House.

the same laudable endeavours to increase the amount of the Egyptian coinage.

From similar reports among the more enlightened inhabitants of the capital the poor country folk and soldiers have probably taken the idea of all Europeans being money-makers in the literal sense of the word; though in the country they have not heard the nightly hammering which the Adoua people assert appeared to issue from some vault, unknown to any one but its owner, cunningly excavated under the dwelling of Hajji Yohannes; nor are they aware that the dollars thus made are lighter than the genuine ones, and will break if let fall from a height on a stone, though the townsfolk are acquainted with all these particulars. I happened to have a good many new dollars, and whenever I circulated any of them the receiver would sometimes exclaim—"Wa! this is only just made; look, how it shines!"

"I often retire to the neighbouring hills, when about to take an observation, or for some other reason wishing to be undisturbed, and seek out some snug little nook or corner among the rocks. Scarcely, however, have I time to make my preliminary arrangements, when looking up I find two or three heads curiously peering into my retreat, fully persuaded that they are about to behold the entire process of obtaining dollars from the earth, ready stamped with the august head of her Imperial Majesty. Sometimes they were most laughably disappointed in their expectations.

"If a servant of mine returns from market with an ass laden with corn or other provisions, the people at once say it is dollars, which, having been made by me during the week, I had left hidden in the rocks, and that the servant had been to fetch them. Even while I am writing this there is a large party of warriors in my room—some looking over me. One, especially, an elderly man, is sitting close by me, begging me to write something about him. His name is Welda Georgis. He is naturally very ugly; nor is his appearance at all improved by the want of his nose, which he says he lost in battle. He cannot speak at all without stopping the holes with his fingers; hence his voice, especially when he speaks

loud, is, as may be judged, not the most harmonious ; and just now he is raising it to a considerable pitch, being excited to wrath by one of his companions insinuating that he was never but in one battle, and that then he ran away before a blow had been struck.

"It may be asked why do I not turn out my visitors when they bother me? I answer, for this plain reason—because I should be vexed if any native were to refuse to indulge my curiosity ; and therefore I consider that I have no right to disoblige them. Besides, though turning a man out is a good way of getting rid of him, it is by no means polite (and politeness is much looked to here), nor is it the way to make yourself liked by the people. It is, however, due to the peasantry to say that they are not very troublesome, the Amhàra soldiers being the real cause of annoyance. But I must leave off writing about them, seeing at this moment the necessity of looking after them, for they are playing dangerous tricks."

Our friend Welda Georgis had got hold of my double-barrelled pistols, and, willing to show off, was retailing to his friends an explanation which I had given him the day before of the manner of cocking and uncocking them. It appears that, anxious to display his knowledge by a practical illustration, he had cocked both barrels, but had made the slight error of pulling the left trigger while he was firmly holding the right hammer. I was disturbed from my writing by a bang, a scream from a woman who was nursing her child and cooking the dinner, and a "Wa !" from Welda Georgis. After a moment's pause he laid the pistol down at a little distance from him, and looking very seriously at it said—"Oh you naughty devil !" Luckily the ball did no harm to any one, only passing through a gourd full of capsicum paste that was hanging up on the other side of the room, and alarming the inhabitants of the next hut by breaking a large corn-jar which stood in their dwelling.

On the evening of October the 2nd I received a present of a hundred heads of Indian corn from Merratch, the chief, accompanied by a polite invitation to come to his hut and

get drunk with him. The former I accepted: the latter, with many thanks for his kind attentions, I declined. Next day I called on him to acquaint him with my intention of leaving Addàro. He expressed himself grieved at my doing so; but his regret abated on my assuring him that I did not intend to leave his province, but only to pass some time in the frontier villages. He represented the dangers and difficulties I was to expect from the Barea, fevers, and even the inhabitants, whom he described as "very good sort of people, but, like most frontier men, rather rough and lawless." I told him that I had heard nearly a similar character of himself and his people before I left Adoua; and that, judging by the agreeable way in which I had been undeceived with regard to them and their country, I could venture to run a similar risk again. Several persons who were also present at the time of my visit united with their chief in endeavouring to dissuade me altogether from leaving them, offering, among other inducements, to build me a house, and marry me to the prettiest girl in the province.

Notwithstanding all these and other temptations, I started the next morning for Rohabaita, accompanied by a guide from Aito Merratch to show me the road and ensure me a kind reception and welcome on my arrival. The distance is not great, not more perhaps than twenty miles; still, encumbered as we were with donkeys, which we had taken instead of porters, and which could not get on, owing to the thorns and stones that obstructed the way, we did not that evening get beyond a village called "Enda Mariam" from the church of St. Mary, which is there. On the road we passed several small villages, and the remains of others. Among them the principal ones are Tokhulimny, Addy Nebrit, and Mai Chena. Each of these is, or was, watered by a running stream; though beyond Enda Mariam the villages depend altogether on wells, scooped out by the natives in the sand left after the rains in the dried-up water-courses, and which supply them with good water for the whole of the dry season; yet almost every week as the

season advances they are of course obliged to dig deeper and deeper to obtain it.

Mai Chena, when it existed, was so called from its brook. Now the brook only remains. The people becoming poor, and many having fled from the oppression of the soldiers, the remainder were unable to defend themselves against the attacks of the Barea, who frequently visit the neighbourhood in large parties; the place was consequently deserted.

At Enda Mariam I bought half a gallon of excellent honey from the good man of the house where I lodged. The price asked for it was a common flint and steel. I concluded the bargain for the steel alone, as I wanted the flint, and he cared little for it. He was much pleased with the exchange. The steel could certainly not be worth more than a halfpenny at Birmingham, if they could make there anything so common. I bought it at Jedda.

Our next day's journey was but short. The road we passed over was rough, but highly picturesque, and we ended our day's work by climbing a very steep hill, the ascent to which was by means of a sort of semi-natural, semi-artificial staircase a mile or two long. Near the top of it, however, we found a pretty little hamlet, called Addy Harisho, where we were hospitably received and comfortably lodged by the lay-dean and chief of the district, Apha-Memher Waddy-Hil.

CHAPTER XVII.

Nine months' stay at Rohabaita—Love of Nature—Description of the province—Productions—The inhabitants—The Happy Valley—My standing with the natives—I join in their pursuits—Their hatred of the Amhàra—Disappearance of a party of the latter—Waddy Hil, the sub-chief—His former prosperity—Imprisoned for non-payment of Oubi's demands—Released and restored to power—His poverty and generosity—Extreme scarcity of provisions—A supply and visit from Obsàbius—Annual conflagrations—The Barea—A perfect deception—Shifts for food—Benefits of semi-starvation—Ugly wounds and speedy cures.

I COULD almost feel disposed to devote many chapters to my nine months' stay at Rohabaita ; but though to me it would be agreeable to dwell on the recollections of the happy hours I passed in that wild spot, I can neither flatter myself that my pen would do justice to the scenes which so much delighted me, nor that, even could description equal the reality, my taste would be in accordance with that of the greater portion of my readers. That a man brought up in the midst of civilization and refinement should presume to look back on the time he passed among savages, without society, without even a book of any sort to refresh his memory, as one of the happiest periods of his life, would to many be equivalent to acknowledging himself possessed of a coarse and unintellectual mind. The beauties of Nature are little known, still less appreciated, in Europe. Her civilized lovers consider themselves to have enjoyed sufficient of her charms if they have seen a fair view or a beautiful waterfall in Switzerland. To require more than this, at least to enjoy more, would in many cases be deemed blameable. To a lover any memento of his mistress must be always agreeable ; but would any man consider such souvenirs, sweet though they be, as equivalent to the pre-

sence of the donor herself? So it is with Nature: to be fully appreciated she must be known in all her attributes.

“ Oh, she is fairest in her features wild,
Where nothing polish'd dares pollute her path.”

Rohabaita is a small district or province belonging to the Church, but in some measure dependent on the chief of Addy-Àbo. It consists principally of a cluster of hills, bounded on the eastern side by the valley of the Mareb, on the west by Addy-Àbo, south by Médevai, and north by the country of the hostile Shangalla.* The villages are built principally near the summits of the hills, from fear of the sudden attacks of their enemies, and of the fatal malaria which at certain seasons of the year prevails in the low valleys. The outline of the country is highly picturesque; though the soil is far from fertile. The slopes of the mountains are unusually steep, and covered with mixed rock and bush, out of which occasionally a huge dima-tree may be seen rearing its head. The valleys between them are narrow, and for the most part terminated at the bottom by watercourses of only a few feet broad, down which in the rainy season pours a torrent, that dries up as soon as the cloudy weather disappears, leaving only a few pools visible; though the inhabitants of the hills always find a supply of water by digging into the sand. This supply would seem to be one of the providences of nature, for in so hot a climate it would be nearly impossible that any quantity of water could be found at so great an elevation if exposed to the influence of the atmosphere. The bottom is rock. Over it the annual torrents have for centuries deposited a coating of sand, now many feet deep, which imbibes and retains a considerable portion of the water that yearly flows over it. The rock below prevents its soaking

* This tribe is erroneously called by the Abyssinians, Shangalla or Barea. The first is the name given by them to all the negro slaves on their frontiers, whether from the neighbourhood of Fazogly or the north. Barea merely means slave. The proper name of the country here alluded to is Bàsena: the people are called Bàza.

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through ; the sand delays its evaporation, and by subjecting it to a process of filtration, before it can enter the hole scraped to receive it, keeps it clear and fresh. A few acres of millet are sometimes cultivated on the mountain-tops near the villages, but in quantity very insufficient for the wants of the population. The low plains called "Gobo" or "Mazzaga" are therefore employed for this purpose. The former word is the one most used here in the sandy districts ; the latter being more commonly applied to the dark-soiled plains of Walkait and Waldabba. Very little "teff" is grown in this neighbourhood, but chiefly millet (*mashéla*) and "dagousha." The people of Rohabaita are, like most frontier men, rather rough in their ideas and manners, but very hospitable, and given to attach themselves to their friends. I had the good fortune during my long residence to become considered as one of the country, and was offered the government of Rohabaita and another neighbouring district by Dejatch Lemma. This prince could not by any means obtain influence over the people of these parts. The inhabitants, when pressed for taxation, fled across the Mareb with their moveables, and took refuge in Dembelas or Quohain. To do anything in the former of these provinces would require a considerable army to be sent thither, as a few soldiers venturing alone would assuredly be murdered. So greatly indeed were the Amhàra detested, that no one even of our own people dared venture there in the long "callis" trousers worn by the soldiers, but for prudence sake left these behind, and donned the "coumta" or short breeches, or the antelope kilt of a frontier man, as a necessary precaution in visiting those out-of-the-way provinces.

I look back upon Rohabaita as a sort of "Happy Valley," with all the necessary enjoyments and none of the drawbacks of the one described by Johnson. But I must not deceive my friends. The climate was wretchedly bad at certain seasons of the year, the accommodation rather inferior to that possessed by our gipsies, and for whole months I have

tasted nothing beyond the produce of the chase (*i. e.* game and honey) and a little of the coarse dagousha bread and capsicums. I can remember running in the heat of the day near two miles up a hill, with the greedy haste of a schoolboy who hears of the arrival of a box of good things from his mamma, feasting my imagination on "galore" of raw onions, which a servant had procured from a neighbouring village. Even milk was very scarce, only one milch cow being found in the neighbourhood, and she left us. In these points was Rohabaita inferior to the Happy Valley. On the other hand, we were better off than the inmates of the Happy Valley, because we had liberty and plenty of excitement; hunting expeditions, &c. An occasional squabble, in the course of which a few throats were cut, came in well as a break to the otherwise too monotonous enjoyment of a tranquil life.

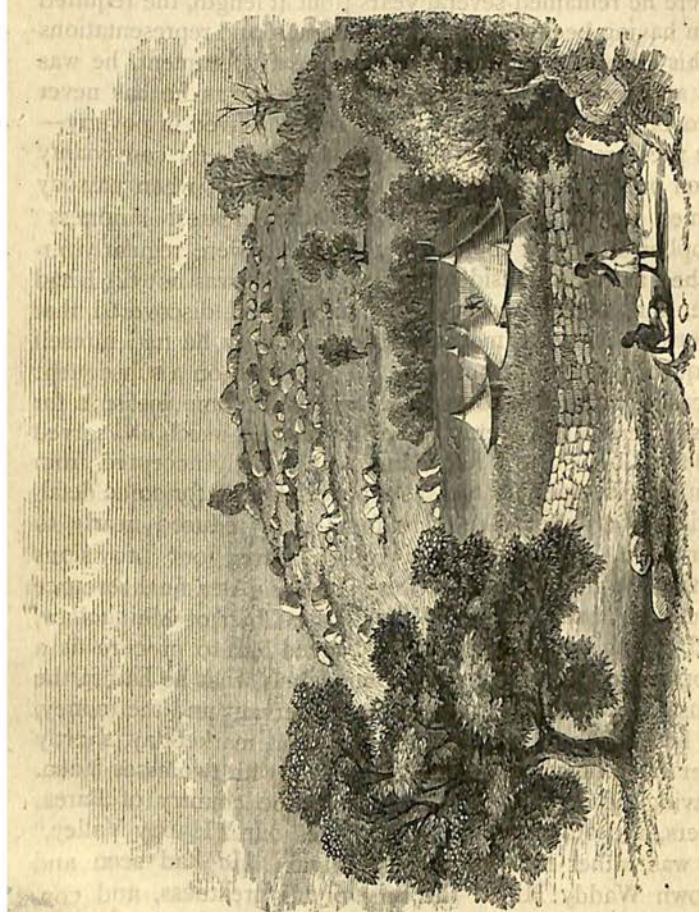
During my whole stay at Rohabaita I was looked upon by the people as a chief (be it known we were in a state of semi-rebellion), and consulted on all the most important occasions. I, for my part, felt myself as one of them, and entered with the greatest sympathy and zeal into all their proceedings. At a feast no one enjoyed the dance and song more than I did. I had the most guns discharged at a funeral. No hunting party or foraying expedition but I was in it. I took my turn in scoutings and outlyings; and I am afraid I must add, that even on one or two occasions, though of course I had no hand in the act, I was privy to the getting rid of a few disagreeable soldiers who came to annoy our peaceful village, and to rob the poor peasantry of what little their predecessors had left them. The truth is, I did not, nor do even now, consider these as other than justifiable homicides. Be it always remembered, the Amhàra are not the lawful rulers of the country; but having conquered it, partly by force, but principally by treachery, they hold it under an iron rod, and pillage the inhabitants to their utmost. The whole of this neighbourhood is, as I before have said, reduced to extreme poverty; and the entire popu-

lation of Rohabaita at the present day scarcely owns as many cattle as one moderately rich man possessed prior to its oppression.

On one occasion I remember being awakened at midnight by a friend of mine, a hunter, who, owning the only milch cow in the neighbourhood, was in the habit of supplying me with milk. He had come to bid me adieu, as he was going to drive off his cattle, a party of *Ainhàra* having arrived that afternoon at the village. He told me all his plans, and set off accompanied by his two brethren and two other men, all well armed. The soldiers, it would appear, had suspicion of this, for next day a small party of them followed in the direction he had taken; but they never returned, nor were heard of after. If reports are to be believed, they lost their way, or were killed by the *Barea* or by buffaloes. Possibly it may have been so; I would defy any one to prove the contrary. To have searched for their bodies in the thick jungle of the *Mareb* would have been nearly as futile as looking for a needle in a truss of hay.

Waddy Hil, the sub-chief and lay dean of the place, who had received me into his house at Merratch's recommendation, was a venerable old man, of a disposition remarkably honourable, and manners peculiarly courteous for an Abyssinian. One trait of his character, which more than any other distinguished him above his fellow-countrymen, was pride. I mean not the species of vanity which is essentially part of the Abyssinian character, but that sort of true pride which prevents a man from acting meanly or dishonestly. His great faults were, that even at his advanced age he could not altogether forego the pleasures of his youth, being remarkable for his fondness of convivial parties, and for the number of fair ladies invited to them. In the days of prosperity he had been very rich and powerful: beside a large body of spearmen, a hundred guns went before him into battle or in processions; and this number of fire-arms is considered as a sign of great power and wealth. His troops, allied with those of Aito Seràphiel of Maitowàro, defeated the army which Dejatch Oubi sent against them, under the

command of Dejatch Welda Yessous (Oubi's uncle) and Fit Aurari Goshu. The latter general was carried off the field severely wounded in the leg by a ball from one of Waddy Hil's matchlock-men. A second stronger force, however,



Waddy Hil's House.

overpowered them. Seràphiel was put into prison, where I believe he remains to this day, and Waddy Hil retired to Rohabaita. On the approach of troops to levy contributions,

the people, having concealed their property, fled the country. This, however, he refused to do, and, remaining, was taken, and required to pay the whole amount demanded of his province. Unable to do so at once, he was cast into prison, where he remained several years ; but at length, the required sum having been collected by his friends, and representations in his favour having been made to the Government, he was set at liberty and restored to power ; but as he has never recovered his property, he has to this day lived in poverty—the pressure of taxation and his natural taste for conviviality often preventing his making both ends meet when pay-day comes on. I received from him the greatest kindness : supplies of all that the country produced were regularly furnished me for a considerable time ; and it was not till I had been long acquainted with his family that I discovered that in order to receive me with due hospitality he had himself frequently suffered from want. I was glad on a subsequent occasion to be able to make up to him in some measure for this generous treatment. The Smyrna rug, which had served me for a bed since I left Cairo, was joyfully accepted from him, by his superior chief, as a peace-offering for some defalcation of tribute. We were for a time reduced nearly to starvation. My good host and I shared our provisions to the last grain ; but they were scanty. As a final resource I sent to Obsàbius, my old friend the Chief of Maiquollaw, and, telling him of our distress, begged him to procure us a supply of corn. He sent us immediately what he had in the house as a free gift, and, retaining a servant and the money, till he could procure more on the next market-day, shortly after came down to Rohabaita himself, with two asses laden. Having never before ventured into the country of Barea, fevers, and other dangers, as he called our “Happy Valley,” he was rather nervous on his arrival. He had seen and known Waddy Hil in the time of his greatness, and congratulated me on my being in such good hands ; he said he was glad to renew the acquaintance of so distinguished a chief, especially as he esteemed him still more now, for the kindness he had shown to his son and father (meaning me) ;

his son, he said, in age; but his father in the respect and affection he bore me. After many compliments on both sides he gave me a large present of hive honey, which was very acceptable. On his return I accompanied him some distance on the road with a small party of our people, as he had been alarmed when coming by signs of Barea. He said that he and all with him were confident that the blacks were outlying on the road, and that he only escaped molestation from being with a strong party, as he had had the luck to join company with a number of people returning from the markets of Semema and Addàro. Scarcely had we passed the brook of Mai-Chena when one of our men, a hunter, declared that he saw the slaves. Being at that time inexperienced in such matters, I could see nothing suspicious. He then pointed out to me a dead tree standing on an eminence at a distance of several hundred yards, and charred black by last year's fire. To explain this, I should remark that the rains cause to spring up a thick jungle of grass, canes, and bushes, which cover the whole surface of country, growing to a height of several feet. When this becomes dry it is set fire to,—in some places by the farmers, as the readiest means of clearing the ground; in others by hunters, to enable them to get at their game with greater facility; and often accidentally, by one of these latter dropping a lighted match. These conflagrations generally clear a mile or two, according to the position and quality of the ground; but occasionally, when the wind is fair and the land level and equally overgrown, they continue burning for several days, and sweep enormous tracts of country. However, all that I saw was a charred stump of a tree, and a few blackened logs or stones lying at its feet. The hunter declared that neither the tree nor the stones were there the last time he passed, and that they were simply naked Barea, who had placed themselves in that position to observe us, having no doubt seen us for some time, and prepared themselves. I could scarcely believe it possible that they should remain so motionless, and determined to explore a little: the rest of the party advised me to continue quietly in the road, as it

was probable that, from our presenting a rather formidable appearance, we should pass unmolested ; but so confident was I of his mistake, that, telling the rest to go on slowly, as if nothing had been observed, I dropped into the long grass and stalked up towards them. A shot from my rifle, at a long distance (I did not venture too close), acted on the tree and stones as powerfully as the fiddle of Orpheus, but with the contrary effect ; for the tree disappeared, and the stones and logs, instead of running after me, ran in the opposite direction. I never was more astonished in my life ; for so complete was the deception, that even up to the time I fired I could have declared the objects before me were vegetable or mineral,—anything, indeed, but animal. The fact was, that the cunning rascals who represented stones were lying flat, with their little round shields placed before them as screens. We made the best of our way, lest they should be but a small detachment from a larger body, and arrived in safety at Addaro. Next day we returned to the spot with a large force, and scoured the whole country, but to no purpose, although traces, not only of the enemy's foot-marks, but also of their camp fires, were plainly visible in various places.

The supply of food which Obsàbius had brought us was most welcome, for we had been absolutely reduced to parched peas and charity ; nay, I might more truly say to the latter only ; for although vetches dried and roasted formed at times the principal part of our sustenance, yet we should have been destitute even of these had it not been for the charity of our neighbours. All sorts of witticisms were abroad at the expense of my servants. Some said that they went out, like monkeys, in troops, to pick berries on the hills, or occasionally rob a few heads of unripe corn from the fields below, part of them feeding, while others kept a sharp look-out, perched up on the high stones. It was, too, just the season of the year when, the fowl being with their eggs and the grass long, I had little chance of much success in the chase ; and even if I did bring home a stray guinea-fowl or gazelle, what was it among so many ?

I should be sorry to relate some of the shifts we were put to, as most people would deprecate my taste on many occasions, while others might think lightly even of my honesty at times.

As a general rule, abstinence does no harm in these climates, but, on the contrary, it is always a good thing, and often necessary. I never felt lighter in my life, or more free from the many ills that vex humanity, than during this my long period of semi-starvation. Wounds of all kinds healed on me like magic, and I never knew what it was to feel lazy or fatigued. On one or two occasions I remember being much astonished at the little I suffered from otherwise ugly wounds about the feet. Once, in running down the stony and almost precipitous path which leads to the Mareb, I struck my bare foot against an edge of rock, which was as sharp as a razor, and a bit of flesh, with the whole of the nail of my left foot little toe, was cut off, leaving only the roots of the nail. This latter I suppose to have been the case, as it has grown all right again. I could not stop longer than to polish off the bit which was hanging by a skin, for we were in chase of a party of Barea, who had cut the throats of three of Waddy Hil's nephews the night before—but was obliged to go on running for about twenty miles that afternoon, the greater part of the way up to our ankles in burning sand. Whether this cured it I know not, but I scarcely suffered at all from it next day, and forgot it the day after. Another day I was running after an antelope which I had wounded, and in my eagerness jumped over a bush, and on to the trunk of a fallen tree. Now it so happened that a bough had once stood exactly where my foot now lighted, but, having been broken off, had left a jagged stump, one splinter of which, of about the thickness of a tenpenny nail, entering the ball of my foot, passed so far through that the point appeared like a black spot immediately under the skin, an inch above the junction of the third and fourth toes, towards the instep, and then broke short off. I got my game, butchered it, and carried it home (some two miles), with the splinter

in my foot, which I then drew out with a nail-wrench. A quantity of blood flowed from the wound, but, with the exception of a little stiffness for a day or two, which however nowise prevented my walking, I suffered no pain at all. Now, had this occurred to me in Europe, and under a good European diet, I should have been at least a fortnight laid up with a bad foot.

As for thorns in the feet, it may be easily imagined that, in a country where there is scarcely a tree unfurnished with these appendages, and some of them of the length of three or four inches, the whole ground must be strewn with them, and, consequently, that the feet of a person going barefoot must frequently act, to all intents and purposes, the part of pincushions; yet I can truly say that, after some time, such is the force of habit and the thickness of skin that one gets by use, I thought no more of picking half-a-dozen thorns out of my feet than an English sportsman would of kicking away the clod of clay he may have accumulated on his shooting-boots in crossing a soft ploughed field.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Course of the Mareb—The Gobo plain—Fount of St. John—Abyssinian hydropathy—Devout patients—Protection of the guardian saint—The 'Evil Eye—The Mareb at different seasons—Fish abundant—The gar-mout—Emigrant crocodiles—Abyssinian mode of fishing—A dubious fishing party—Great variety of game—Ornithology.

As I before said, the river Mareb runs at the feet of the mountains on which the villages of Rohabaita stand. I might perhaps have been more easily understood had I stated that after passing Goundet (where we crossed it on our way to Adoua) and Aderbàti, its valley is walled in on the one side by the hills of Medevai and Rohabaita, and on the other by those of Quohain, Serawi, &c. Before arriving, however, at the point we are describing, it leaves for a time its north-westerly course and makes a short but abrupt turn to the westward. Opposite to Rohabaita it resumes its former direction.

From our village a very steep and rugged path, scarcely marked among the stones and briars through which it passes, brings you, after near an hour's hopping and scrambling, to the "Gobo." This is a large plain of several thousand acres, surrounded on three sides by hills, and on the fourth descending towards the river. Though from its position rather wanting in air, and rather too hot, it is a beautiful spot. Except at seed-time and harvest not a human being comes to visit it, unless it be a few hunters occasionally passing on their way to the Mareb. Some two or three hundred acres of barely cleared ground have been selected for cultivation; the remainder is a wild jungle, principally of various kinds of mimosas. The buffalo and elephant frequently visit the place; antelopes of several varieties may

be seen at times, though nowhere in these parts are they to be met with in the abundance in which they are said to be found in Southern Africa. The trees are filled with birds. Beautiful sunbirds and others flit about the sweet-scented blossoms of the mimosa; while parrots and the long-tailed parroquets, whistling, pass in flights from one large tree to another in the neighbouring clearings. Eagles and hawks of many species come down from the hills in quest of prey, and nearly all the varieties belonging to the low, hot climates of Abyssinia are to be met with. A dried watercourse forms a natural path across the plain, agreeable in some places from being shaded by overhanging trees, though the deep sand which forms it renders the walking rather heavy.

After crossing the Gobo, a considerable tract of wild undulating ground descends gradually to the sacred fount of St. John. This spring is not only, as I have often found it, very refreshing as a cool, shady spot where a hot or weary hunter may rest awhile and bathe, but is reputed by the natives to possess almost miraculous healing properties. There are many others in Abyssinia which are supposed to have similar virtues, and are accordingly named after some good patron saint. A few of them may probably contain medicinal properties, but, from their want of taste, I should be inclined to suspect that most of them, like St. Ann's Well at Malvern, derive their great virtue from their purity.

The hydropathic system of Vincent Priessnitz, though not understood, is fully practised in these parts. St. John, St. George, or St. anybody else, has, however, it would appear, a prior right to the honour of the discovery of the modern *St. Vincent*. The great causes of the cures effected by St. John's water at Rohabaita are no doubt the same that work those wonders which we hear of daily at Gräfenberg, Umberslade, or Malvern. There must be plenty of air, for the bathers live under the trees in the midst of the wild forest. Some exercise they must have undergone to reach the spot, for there is scarce a house within half-a-day's journey, if so near; and they are obliged to walk about to collect

fuel, often from some distance, as little is now to be found near at hand. With regard to diet, they live on very little. For perspiration, the climate is as good as a dry pack; and for good water, both to drink and to bathe in; there is plenty. That many cures are effected is certain; not only from report do I say so, but also from the proofs which I have seen with my own eyes. Before returning home, every patient who has been benefited, hangs on a neighbouring tree the blue silk cord which he has worn round his neck as a sign of his being a Christian; and the bushes all about the well are covered with these tokens of gratitude. I have frequently found persons there: and once I remember having been struck at seeing three very miserable-looking wretches from Serawi stretched under the trees. They told me that they had been there nearly a fortnight, and that their friends visited them every now and then, and brought them supplies. As they were totally unarmed, and apparently in a weak state of health, I inquired if they were not afraid of the Barea or of the wild beasts. To this they most devoutly replied that the patron saint guarded the place and them from all dangers; that lions were not only heard by them in the immediate neighbourhood, but that they even occasionally came down to drink at the well. In no instance, however, they added, in the memory of man, was any ill known to have happened to one who put his trust in holy St. John. That lions abound in the neighbourhood every one knows, and I have myself tracked them to the spring; so that thus far their story is true, and only confirms me in my opinion that lions, like all other animals, are loth, when unprovoked, to attack a man. During my stay in Africa I should think that I had lions prowling round me at night on above a hundred different occasions; in fact, in some places, such as the one of which we are now speaking, scarce a night was ever passed in the backwoods without my hearing them close at hand; but they never attacked me, nor, excepting the first few nights, even caused me the slightest alarm or uneasiness.

In many parts of the East, as in Italy, they have great dread of the effects of the evil eye; but the Eastern's

imagination does not confine the exercise of this baneful influence to certain persons only: they believe that the look or expression of admiration of almost any one will, unless it be coupled with praise to the Almighty Creator, injure the object which has elicited it. Thus, a mother, far from being gratified with the remark, "What a beautiful child!" being made regarding her infant, would be highly annoyed, unless the speaker were to add, "praised be God;" and children and animals, nay, even boats and houses, are all provided with some striking ornament, whereto the eyes, or rather the feelings, of the passer-by being first attracted, their influence becomes weakened, and the wearer is less subject to injury. A child will wear bright-coloured ribbons or large silver or gold plates hung on his neck; and the favourite charm for houses is a large dried aloe-plant or a stuffed crocodile hung over the doorway. It might appear that the flattering character the poor patients had given me of the protection they received from St. John had rather weakened its virtue, for, some time after, happening to pass by, I was attracted by a foul smell to a spot where I found the vultures congregated over the body of an unfortunate wretch whom the Barea had murdered there.

The fountain is situated in a dingle, and overshadowed by large trees. A considerable stream of water is collected by a hollowed trunk laid in it as a pipe, and falls a few feet into a deepish pool beneath, in which the people bathe. The course of the stream which flows from "Abouna Yohannes" is the way usually chosen by persons going to the Mareb; and though it is not a very easy road, yet it is far more practicable than the thick jungle which borders it on either side. In some places, however, you are obliged to wade up to your middle in mud and water, while in others you are caught fast by the bushes above. After going some distance you ascend from the stream, and find yourself in a clearer tract of country, which by many undulations leads you to the Mareb. I have often shot large antelopes and wild boars in the way between St. John's Well and the Mareb; and the traces of buffaloes and elephants are in general to be seen

there in plenty, though the animals themselves are more often found among the canes and jungle of the Mareb below.

Like most of the rivers of this country, the Mareb increases greatly during the rainy weather, and in fact inundates its banks for a considerable distance on either side. At that season of the year, however, it is never visited, partly on account of the fevers which prevail, and partly because it is generally impassable. During the dry season, which is the time for hunting, when the heat and dryness of the atmosphere have dissipated the malaria, or rather removed its causes, the inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces cross over to visit each other and to attend each other's markets. The river then presents a different appearance. No longer a broad muddy torrent sweeps down the valley; a belt of sand, bordered by a thick impassable jungle of canes, marks the limits of its former course, while its waters are reduced to a small clear rivulet, which, in some places, trickles along, in others collects like a bath in a hollow with a rock bottom; or, where the soft sand sucks it up, loses itself altogether for a short distance. In the hollows, abundance of fish are often found, which may be caught by tickling them in the crevices of the rocks. One of them, called in Tigre "ambaza," and in Arabic "garmout," is common and rather curious. It is entirely black, and its fins resemble those of an eel, while from its jaws hang six long strings like a beard. This fish, in some places, attains to a great size. I have seen it in the Nile as large as 80 lbs. or more. It will bury itself in the mud during the dry season. In Khartoum I was rather surprised, after only a few days' rain, to see that a hollow place in my garden, which in the rainy season became a pond, contained a great number of these "garmout," some of near half a pound weight. On inquiring of the natives, they told me that the fish had probably remained alive for several months, during the whole dry season, caked up in the mud, which, after the water leaves it, becomes in a few days dry and hard like a brick. Unless they had been rained down, there was no other means of accounting for their appearance. The

hollow was very large, but entirely unconnected with any other water, and the ground had been sown during the previous months with millet.

I have heard a similar account about the discovery of a crocodile buried in the mud of a dry pool, many miles distant from any water. It was discovered by some soldiers in Upper Nubia, and dug out in the presence of two European medical men, and of Ahmed Pacha, who at that time commanded the army and provinces of Soudan. Many persons in those countries have assured me of the existence of land crocodiles, which were found far from the water; but I should be inclined to think that they were emigrants who in the wet season had strayed inland, and settled in some pool or hole. Not far from the village of Shahagny, near Âdoua, where Mr. Schimper lived before the government of Antichau was given to him, a huge crocodile was killed in a sort of natural well, whence the people of the place drew water. Several sheep had vanished unaccountably, but no one guessed the cause, till, waxing impudent, the monster seized upon a poor little girl who was in the act of filling her pitcher. This well is at a very great distance from any water where crocodiles are supposed to exist. But, in truth, in these countries it is a most dangerous thing to bathe in any deep hole or brook: you are never certain but you may find the berth occupied, and yourself welcomed with a most disagreeably cordial embrace.

The Abyssinians usually fish their small streams by damming them up above and below, and poisoning the water, as I have before described. This, though not a sportsmanlike, is certainly a very profitable way of fishing. I remember once being astonished at the number caught by a body of men whom we saw fishing in the Mareb.

A small party of us from Rohabaita being stationed one day on a rock at a short distance from the stream, as a convenient spot whence we could have a good look-out, both up and down the valley, for signs of anything that might be on the move, whether man or beast, the approach of a considerable number of the former rather startled us, and induced

us to keep close and watch their proceedings. As they advanced nearer, however, their appearance led us to believe them to be Abyssinians, instead of Barea, for whom we had mistaken them. They were about thirty in number, and all armed with lances, shields, and knives. To our inquiry they answered that they were from Serawi, and had come down to catch some fish for the market. Our people pretended to believe this story; and so completely did they feign credence that they threw the fishermen off their guard, and in course of conversation drew from them that they had been several days on the river, and that they had known of our being there also, by having seen our traces some distance below. The fact is, that they were no doubt from Dëmbelas or Tokhoul, possibly followers of the rebel Gãbro Wahed, and had come down to pick up any stragglers they might meet, whether hunters or peasants, crossing between Rohabaita and Serawi. They had doubtless been on our trail for some days; and as for their fishing, it was either for their own food or merely as a blind to lure any one who might see them. During our interview they left all the speaking to one man, the rest keeping aloof, and talking among themselves in an under tone. Though we were only nine, yet all but two of us were armed with guns, and this probably deterred them from manifesting any hostile intentions they might have had towards us. Our suspicions were confirmed by their immediately leaving the upward course they had apparently been taking, and returning downwards in anything but the direction of Serawi; and some days after, on our arrival at the village, we heard that a man coming over from Serawi had been robbed and beaten by a party whose description, both in numbers and appearance, answered to theirs exactly.

Certain of the deeper parts of the river appear to be the favourite drinking-places of the wild beasts, for in the sand near them may be seen the traces of almost every species of animal, from the elephant, lion, and buffalo, to the tiny hoof-prints of the smaller varieties of gazelle; and so numerous that it would appear as if they had been driven down in herds. Trails too of serpents of every size may be seen, from the

boa-constrictor to the smallest viper; and from the fine sand near the water's edge may be studied the different forms of feet of the, raptorial, natatorial, grallatorial, or insessorial orders, better than in any book of ornithology. Such a place, at first view, raises high the expectations of the naturalist or sportsman; but the jungle, accessible only through paths trodden in it by the elephant or buffalo, is a cover where the game can lie safe from their attacks. The ornithologist has most chance of success; for in the stream are often found many varieties of water-birds, and the large trees and bushes on the higher ground will furnish him with a good many specimens of the other orders.

CHAPTER XIX.

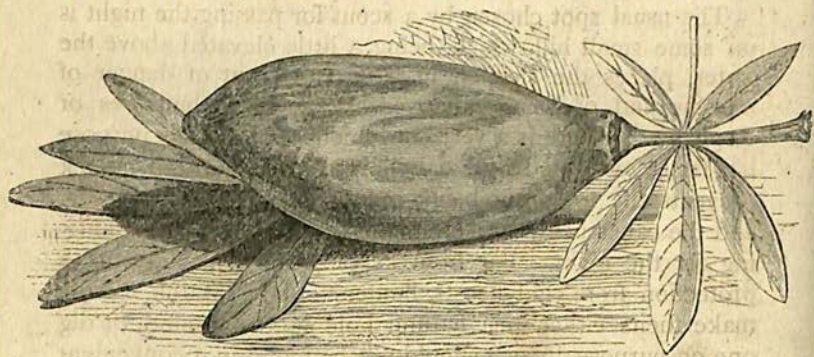
Belief in omens—Its effects on a war-party—Scouting—A scout's dress and implements—His enjoyments—Food of St. John the Baptist—Nightly precautions—Lions—Difficulty of getting at them—The rifle's place at night—A party of cowards—Fruitless pursuit—Abyssinians courageous in proportion as they are well fed and clothed—Demoralizing tendency of national slavery—The Barea—Their cunning and agility—Their mode of attack—Easily repulsed by firmness—Their practice when pursued—Anecdotes concerning them—Their mode of passing the night previous to an attack—Rencontres with them—Reflections thereon.

BEFORE starting on any expedition, the Abyssinians, like the ancient Romans, listen for the voice of certain birds ; and according to whether their notes are heard on the right hand or on the left, so do they anticipate a prosperous or unfavourable journey. I have known many expeditions for the purposes of war or hunting postponed at the moment when, if undertaken, success seemed nearly certain, simply because a little bird called from the left-hand side at starting. Similarly, many a wife has been kept for several days anxiously expecting her husband, because the bird chose to perch on the right hand ; the right-hand omen being propitious for setting out from home, the left for returning. The black and white falcon, called here "gaddy gaddy," is considered a bird of omen in some parts of Tigrè. If this bird fly away at the approach of travellers, the sign is unfavourable ; while, on the contrary, if it remain perched and looking at them, they count upon a most prosperous journey. Hunters on the Mareb follow much the warning of a small bird as to the direction they should take ; and I have known parties turn back from pursuing the fresh trail of a herd of buffaloes, and take an opposite direction, merely because its chirp was heard on the wrong side. Once, a party of about thirty

Barea having been reported to be in the neighbourhood, a large force collected, perhaps a hundred and fifty men ; but after arriving in sight of the enemy the gallant army returned peaceably home, and considered such a course not only justifiable but right, because, when halting to reconnoitre, the omen had been heard on the side favourable to their adversaries. On another occasion I had started on a hunting and foraying expedition, with some fifteen tried and picked men. We had remained a fortnight in the frontier woods, and had seen nothing of the Barea : one day, however, a bird gave us an omen of success, and the night following we discovered their fires on a hill scarce a mile distant from where we lay. Our party was in a moment on the *qui vive* : primings were looked to, edges of knives felt and rubbed on a stone, and each one anticipated the glory he was to gain for himself in butchering a few of the enemy. Some were even so much excited, that they began to strut about and count their deeds of valour, in expectancy of what they would have to do on their return home ; and, to use a Yankee expression, the whole felt themselves "half froze for hair," or rather for the still more cruel trophies which Abyssinians take from their slaughtered enemies. But a night-bird's voice settled the whole business ; and instead of waiting, as had been our intention, for a few hours before sunrise to strike the *coup*, we all sneaked off homeward, like so many whipped dogs ; for the vainglory of the warriors had oozed out of their finger-ends at this intimation of the beaked augur that their bones would be safest in the bosoms of their family circles. In advancing, signs of the Barea were eagerly sought for ; in retreating, so great was the panic caused by the unwitting bird, that we kept the sharpest look-out lest they should come upon us unawares.

There is nothing so agreeably exciting as this sort of expedition, or even as scouting in these countries ; though the latter is rather lonely work, especially when, as is often the case, it is undertaken by a single man. Still I have often been a week or more alone on this sort of errand for my own amusement, without even saying where I was going,

or indeed without so much as knowing it myself. It is a most independent life. My dress on those occasions consisted of a short kilt of nicely tanned antelope's hide, a piece of coarse cotton cloth wrapped round my waist by day as a belt and used as a covering at night, and a small wild cat's or jackal's skin thrown over the left shoulder. Add to these a kid-skin filled with flour, a little horn of cayenne pepper and salt mixed, and a small piece of thin leather for a bed, and you have all the wardrobe, kitchen, and furniture which an Abyssinian frontier-man thinks necessary for a fortnight's outlying. A flint and steel, slow match, an awl, nippers for extracting thorns, and arms and ammunition, are of course added: and with such means for procuring comforts, and some luck with his rifle, if a man cannot be happy in a dry climate, I wonder what he would wish for! Even if you have no sport with game, there are always small birds, snakes, fish, lizards, &c., to be had; so that you need never want. Besides, the branches of the dima-tree furnish a kind



Fruit of the Dima (*Adansonia digitata*). Natural length, about 9 inches.

of fruit, which, though not very solid as food, yet aids much to the flavour of the *cuisine*. It has a large greenish shell (as it may be called): inside of it are a number of seeds, attached to which by fibres is a quantity of yellowish white cakey powder, having a sweetish acid taste, and when mixed

with water forming an agreeable beverage, something resembling lemonade. The Abyssinians make a paste of this, mixing it with red pepper and salt, and eat it with the "gogo" bread. When the dima reaches a certain size its trunk almost always becomes hollow ; and then it often contains wild honey, which may easily be obtained with the help of a small axe and fire. St. John the Baptist's living on locusts and wild honey is easily understood by any one who has been in these countries. The Abyssinians refuse to eat the locust, and deny that it was the insect which was the Saint's food, asserting that it was the fruit of a tree called by the same name (ambatta). The niggers and inhabitants of Sennaar, however, eat the locusts willingly. I have often tasted them ; and though there is nothing disagreeable in their flavour, still I cannot say that they are a particularly delicious food. The natives prepare them by pulling off their legs and wings, and roasting them on an iron dish, like coffee.

The usual spot chosen by a scout for passing the night is on some small hill, which, being a little elevated above the water, places the sleeper, in a measure, out of danger of miasma and of being run over by a herd of buffaloes or elephants. There is a very convenient spot for this purpose not far below Rohabaita : a hollow in the top of the hillock prevents the fire from being seen either by man or beast, and the canes below are often chosen by buffaloes as lodging for the night. Far from keeping up great fires, as a protection from wild beasts, hunters on the Mareb usually make theirs either in a natural hole in the ground, or dig one on purpose, if such should not be found in a convenient spot, and pile boughs of trees all round to prevent the glare from being seen. These precautions are necessary, partly that the blaze may not keep away the buffalo, and partly lest it should attract the Barea. As for the lions, they almost always prowled about us during the night ; but our only prayer was that they might stop near us and not disturb other game. I fancy that the attacks from which travellers have suffered must have been induced by their

having animals with them. I remember one night being especially annoyed by lions. We were anxiously waiting for morning to attack a herd of buffaloes that we had watched into some canes not many hundred yards distant. Two lions had been prowling round us for some hours. At last, tired of us, they descended and fell upon our horned neighbours; and we had the mortification of hearing them gallop away with the lions after them. Even if the pursuers had had luck, we might have profited by it; for we should surely have killed a gorged lion next day, besides getting the horns, and perhaps part of the skin, of its victim.

I never killed a lion single-handed during all my stay in Abyssinia; it is not an easy thing to accomplish. In the plain country they are almost unknown. In the "quollas" they are plentiful, but no one knows where to find them in the day-time: in fact, from the nature of the country, to discover them is almost impossible. I never once heard a native hunter of these parts say that he had seen or heard of a lion's den. The opinion of the natives was, that these animals lived during the day among the inaccessible rocks and jungle, but at no fixed place. A few are killed; but these are either met by accident, or are found sleeping after having gorged themselves on some animal. At night I have often watched for them, but generally without success; a stream is very different from a single pool; you station yourself at a spot where by their trails you see they have been before, watch all night, and in the morning find that, either by accident or being aware of your presence, they have selected another drinking-place half a mile off; and when they did come it was next to impossible to shoot them.

You hear a lion roar in the distance; presently a little nearer; then you start up hearing a short bark close by; and if there be a fire or moonlight, perhaps you may see a light-coloured object gliding quickly past from one bush to another: before you are sure whether or no you saw anything, it is gone. You sit watching for a moment, rifle in hand, expecting him to appear again, when (how he got

there you know not) his roar is heard at a considerable distance off in an opposite direction : and thus you go on for an hour or two, when, getting sleepy, you politely request him to take himself off to a certain warm place, and, returning your rifle between your legs, roll over and go to sleep. Some people may think that this is a queer place for a rifle ; but, on the contrary, it is the position of all others wherein utility and comfort are most combined. The butt rests on the arm, and serves as a pillow for the head ; the muzzle points between the knees, and the arms encircle the lock and breech ; so that, besides having a smooth pillow, the butter from your hair is beneficially employed in toughening the wood, instead of being lost on a stone, while you are always prepared to start up armed at a moment's notice.

A propos of sleeping on hills. A party of fourteen men once rested for the night on an eminence near the river, and at no great distance from the road between Addy Harisho, where I lived, and Devra Mariam, a village of Serawi, to which they belonged. Early in the morning three of them went down to fetch water, leaving the remainder to prepare the breakfast. After a short time, as they did not return, some of their comrades set out to see what had become of them ; and, cautiously advancing, saw a party of nine Barea leaving the spot ; so they returned in haste, and told their companions what they conjectured had been the probable fate of their brethren. Now, although the survivors were eleven in number, all armed, and according to their own account (and in these matters Abyssinians always exaggerate) the Barea were inferior to them in numbers by two persons, still they had not the courage to attempt to punish the murderers, or even to ascertain for certain the fate of their victims, but sneaked away among the grass, and returned homeward to Serawi, bearing the sad news. The three sufferers were relations of my host, and the news was sent across to us with all speed, that we might join the force which was to be raised to pursue the enemy. Accordingly, though we all foresaw that, from so much time having been lost, we had little chance of succeeding in our enterprise,

still, disgusted with the cowardice and lethargy of our neighbours of Serawi, we determined to set them a better example, and immediately started down the river in hopes of cutting off the retreat of the enemy, without heeding the meeting-place which had been assigned to us. But it was of no use : the Barea, after striking a *coup*, are too wise to remain long in the same spot, and being more active, and quite as well acquainted with the country as the Abyssinians, they had no doubt arrived near their own frontier long before we even started in pursuit of them. Returning after a hard day's work, we found the people of Serawi dawdling about, taking the bodies to be buried, while some of them had even the impudence to upbraid us for having started without them, and for not having attended the place of meeting agreed upon. A few of our party were desirous of forming a strong force, in order to avenge our lost friends, but we could not collect a dozen who would consent to join us : some pleaded that it was better to stay at home and guard their property and families ; others, that although that sort of foray would have been well enough in better times, yet now they were a poor and oppressed race, and had therefore more inclination to remain at home and try to make money. It is a well-known fact, that, if you feed an Abyssinian well, and clothe him smartly, he will, as he becomes fat and proud, be not only tolerably courageous, but even often horribly quarrelsome ; while, if thin and ragged, he is as meek as a half-weaned lamb. An Abyssinian's courage, indeed, chiefly depends either on personal vanity or interested hopes ; there are, of course, many exceptions to this rather too general rule ; and while I speak of them thus severely on this point, I cannot but pity rather than blame them. Before the oppression of the Amhàra they were truly brave ; but when a nation is reduced to a state of slavery, it is rare that it does not become demoralized in every way, the people losing their former energy and that feeling of pride which, after all, is mostly the inducement to great deeds : Until the Tigrèans were subdued they had had for centuries the prestige of victory on their side, and this is

always a great encouragement even to brave men : now they have nothing, being scarcely to be considered as a nation, trodden under foot and oppressed as they are by the stranger. The Barea, moreover, are enemies not at all to be despised even by the bravest. Equal in every respect, as regards cunning and agility, to the Red Indians of North America, they are superior to them in point of stature and physical strength.. When they lie out near a road, in wait for passers-by, they will follow a strong party for days, gliding unperceived and noiselessly, like so many snakes in the grass, and waiting till an opportunity occurs when the party, fatigued or hungry, should put aside their weapons, and seek for repose at a halting-place ; at other times they will lie concealed near a road, with scouts in every direction on the look-out, yet no one venturing to speak, but only making known by signs what he may have to communicate to his companions or leader. Thus he will point to his ear and foot on hearing footsteps, to his eyes on seeing persons approach, or to his tongue if voices be audible ; and will indicate on his fingers the numbers of those coming, describing also any particulars as to how many porters, beasts of burden or for riding, there may be with the party. This was told me by a man who had been taken prisoner by them, and lived for some time among them.

Their attack is made on a sign from their leader, by a volley of stones and clubs being discharged at once on the comers ; and before they have recovered from the disagreeable start which this rattle about their ears may have caused them, the Barea rush at them with the fury of so many devils, armed with lance and sword. Their lances are very poor tools, and seldom much esteemed by them for fighting, being more often employed for digging holes in the ground ; the formidable two-edged, cross-handled broadsword, used by all the Arabs and Nubians, is their favourite weapon, and one which they generally wield with considerable vigour, if not skill. Like most people acting on the offensive in a bad cause, it has frequently been remarked of these savages that, if their opponents, undismayed by their first attack, stand

firm, or advance boldly to meet them, they will retire as fast as they came on ; whereas, if the attacked party be taken by surprise, they will most assuredly butcher every man of them. It is of no use running away, for they have longer legs than their neighbours, both when pursuing and flying. In their retreats they evince quite as much cunning as in their attacks. As I before said, they are in general both stronger and lighter of foot than the Abyssinians ; but if by chance an old or clumsy Barea should find himself pursued by an Abyssinian, and perceive that his pursuer gains on him, he will first drop his garment, then his lance, then his shield, retaining always to the last his trusty sword. The Barea, in doing this, shows his knowledge of the character of his enemy. An Abyssinian is always most anxious for a trophy, and would never think of passing by anything thus cast away by the foe, lest some one of his comrades should pick it up, and gain the credit which he more deservedly aspired to ; so he takes up each successive article as it is thrown down, and in the end the Barea usually succeeds in effecting his escape ; for his pursuer not only encumbers himself with what he has to carry, but also, by frequently stopping to collect his trophies, allows the fugitive a considerable advantage. Moreover, to speak the truth, many an Abyssinian would prefer letting a Barea get away to forcing him to stand and fight for his life.

Once a party were returning to Rohabaita, having been to the market of Addàro, when coming to the halting-place they cautiously examined the whole neighbourhood, and, satisfied that no danger was near them, prepared to take their meal and repose ; but the Barea, more cunning than they, had concealed themselves so well that they remained undiscovered, although at no great distance from the spot where the Abyssinians were lying. Many of the latter were fatigued from having carried large packs, and the others were equally so from running about after the laden asses, which is no easy task, as the packs get displaced, and the animals generally manage to stray out of the road in the most awkward places. Having filled their stomachs,

the whole party was getting comfortably drowsy, when up got the Barea, and at the first onset killed several of the sleepers; the remainder, however, were, it appears, rather better men than their brethren of the present day, for they started up and fought so bravely that, after killing many of their assailants, they put the others to flight. This happened many years ago. One of the survivors of the party, now an old man, was my informant; he himself killed two on that occasion, one of whom, from his person and shield being ornamented with strings of beads, was probably a man of consideration.

The Barea will not attack a party that shows a bold face. One day I was going to Addàro, with five of my servants armed, and a grass-cutter, quite a boy. We were joined by two peasants, who were driving donkeys laden with millet. Of our party, two of my servants had guns, more indeed for show than for use, as one of them scarcely knew even how to load his: the others had spears and shields. The two peasants were also armed, each with a lance and a small shield. My boy carried my rifle, and I had a knife and pistols. So we were in all nine persons; and though not quite strong enough to venture on attacking a superior enemy, should we meet one, yet quite sufficiently so to defend ourselves. We had passed Enda-Mariam, and were on our way to Mai-Chena (a brook notorious as a lurking-place of the blacks), when we were met by three boys who were running homeward apparently in a great fright, and who on coming up with us advised us not to proceed any further, as they had, from the top of a hill, observed a large party of Barea coming in the direction of the ford. Believing that their fears had deceived them, or that they were trying to hoax us, we discredited their story and continued our way, thinking very little, after a few minutes, either of them or the Barea, till on arriving near the water a fresh print of a foot was pronounced by a native to be that of one of the enemy. The others of the party agreeing with him in opinion, we entered into a hurried consultation as to what course it was most expedient to pursue. It was

evident that if the Barea were in Mai-Chena they could not be more than a few yards distant from us, and that, having seen us, we had no chance of escaping by flight—a course which was indeed proposed by only two of the party, and their vote was instantly negatived ; so, forming ourselves into a sort of triangle, we determined, if opposed, to clear the way for ourselves. One of the two peasants was an elephant-hunter, and took a gun from one of my servants, who knew better the use of the lance ; and so we advanced really in good style, singing, and looking as plucky as we conveniently could under the circumstances. Arrived at the brook, we found indubitable proofs of their neighbourhood—leaves and grass which they had put on stones to sit upon, a broken gourd, and a great number of foot-prints in the sand, which the water was even yet gradually filling. They had evidently seen our approach, and had doubtless taken up a snug position, either for an attack or to defend themselves. The road for a short distance ran among mounds and bushes, out of which we expected every moment to see an enemy spring, or at least to receive a hostile missile of some kind ; but, except an occasional rustle, nothing occurred till we got into clear country. Arrived there, we felt our courage wax something awful. We halted, and consulted whether we might not do a little in the glory-gaining line by going into the jungle again, and striking for a trophy or two ; but this was objected to by the wiser of the party, as our fire-arms would then give us no advantage over them, since it would be necessarily all close-quarter work, and because they would see us, while we should probably not see them. So we contented ourselves with standing on a rise and hallooing at them, calling them all the names our imaginations could suggest, in a language which of course they could not understand ; and my grass-cutter, a boy of fourteen, and so slight that I doubt if he could have killed a rat, grew so bloodthirsty that he was obliged to give vent to his otherwise over-boiling feelings by picking up a small pebble, and casting it manfully in the direction in which the enemy were supposed

to lie hidden. None of the men who were with me, excepting the two peasants, were natives of this part of the country, and to this I attribute in a great measure their unusually brave conduct—while the prudent conduct of our enemies may be attributed to our wearing the rather smart costume of soldiers on this occasion (we were going on a visit to Merratch, and were attired in our best toggery), and to the difference between the long spears, broad shields, and red morocco sheathed swords of our party, and the trumpery arms which they had been accustomed to see carried by the people of the country.

During my stay we were frequently annoyed by the incursions of the Barea. Shortly after my first arrival the districts of Zagger and Asgaddy lost a number of men; and in our own immediate neighbourhood a village of Tokhulimny, in which parish I was then residing, was one night attacked, and four persons were killed and three taken prisoners. The most amusing thing I ever heard of was their walking off with two elderly gentlemen, one a petty chief of a village in Rohabaita, only two miles from Addy Harisho, and rather a great man in his way, especially in his own opinion. By the way, this happened before the case I have just mentioned. It was on the very day that I was changing quarters for a month or two, and going to Tokhulimny on a visit. I was just taking a sort of stirrup-cup with the old chief Waddy Hil, my mule standing saddled outside the hut, and my men waiting, when I heard a loud wail from a distance. I called his attention to it, and we went out; and after a moment's pause, the cry, "The slaves are at Addy 'Kháwk'hat," was distinctly heard from a neighbouring hill. This was a most disagreeable piece of news for all parties. Most of our villagers had relatives there; and as the messenger could give us no particulars from the distance at which he called, the worst apprehensions were immediately formed. The women began to wail and lament with loud cries. The men set about to prepare their weapons with a bustle which appeared to me more like the confusion of fright than eagerness for the fray.

We were truly in an unpleasant situation : the enemy might choose to come and pay us a visit also. Their having ventured to attack a village in broad daylight, proved that the party was a strong one, whereas we were able to muster only about twenty men from the village and neighbourhood, the rest being in the fields or otherwise engaged at a distance. Such as we were, however, we started for the supposed scene of bloodshed, leaving only the old men and boys to take care of the women ; and after crossing about the most fatiguingly rough piece of country imaginable, arrived at the foot of the hill on which the village is situated. Even while yet below, the yells of the women were distinctly audible, and made us hurry on, fancying that the slaughter was still proceeding ; but when we reached the summit we found that the place had not actually been attacked, but that Goetàna Aito Welda Selassy, the chief, and Goetàna Aito Somebody Else, both highly respectable gentlemen, happening to be out for a morning's walk towards their cotton-fields, had accidentally put their feet into the midst of a band of Barea, who had walked them off as prisoners, if they had not murdered them. The former, however, was the opinion most generally entertained. It was painful to hear the poor wives and children of the missing worthies bewailing them as dead. Truly were they widowed and bereaved, though their husbands or fathers were possibly alive. I could not help pitying them : still I had to fight hard with myself in order to repress a smile which kept coming up just when it was least wanted, at the notion of the great, the worthy, the pompous Aito Welda Selassy's possible fate. A man of his dignity to be sold to the Arabs, thence to the Turks, and made in all probability to perform the most menial household offices, was such a truly ludicrous reverse of fortune. This is all very well on paper ; but feelings of pity actuated us more than even those of mirth on the occasion, and so we set out to join the other villagers who were already on the trail of the enemy. We passed the spot where the Barea had lain the night before, and found that they were a hundred and

seventy-two strong. This we knew by counting the number of fire-holes they had made. The cunning varlets come during the night near the place they intend to attack, and then, halting in some snug position, each man digs a hole for himself. In this he lights a fire, which he keeps going by occasionally fanning it with his shield, and over which he squats, keeping his cloth spread all round him to prevent the glare from being seen. Thus every man is warm; and there is no danger of their being discovered, which there would be if large fires were allowed to be lighted. A few spies are generally sent out during the night; but attacks are seldom made till about two hours before sunrise, just when the morning air breathes chilly, and men cuddle themselves up and sleep soundest.

It would appear that on the present occasion they had formed a false estimate of the strength of the village, or that its lofty position deterred them from attacking it; and so, having passed the night fruitlessly, they determined to lie in wait and pick up some stragglers. We pursued them for two days, and then returned to our homes. I never saw such an amount of valour as that displayed by the way. It was really quite wonderful. One man was to take two trophies, another three; none talked of prisoners, all were so very bloodthirsty. I look back on that day with a feeling of pride. I felt as brave as any one: in fact, we all felt gloriously brave. But, to tell the truth, we none of us thought it at all probable, or even possible, that we should come up with our chase, or really I don't know whether we should have been quite so gloriously disposed. Once or twice, when one of the party fancied he saw something ahead, I remarked that we all became rather more mercifully inclined; but the thirst for blood and glory returned as soon as the supposed Barea proved to be inanimate objects.

Thus much for our unsuccessful affairs with these fellows. I wish I had some fine story to dilate upon of a desperate fight, wherein I by my valour ("that courage which is an

essential part of the character of every man of our nation"!*) had saved the rest of the party, and where I had done deeds worthy of a Bayard or an Admirable Crichton. Alas! I have none such to tell. The only rencontres which I could relate would in nowise either amuse my readers or reflect credit on any person connected with the victors, being for the most part bloody retaliations, wherein a few men were butchered and mutilated by often ten times their numbers. That they were just retributions there is no doubt; for "he that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." But I do not care to recall them, and should hope that few of my countrymen would consider the descriptions of such scenes as more agreeable than would be that of the decapitation of a criminal, or some peculiar mode of butchering animals.

* I quote this out of a book of travels, the author of which (not an Englishman) thus described his own prowess.

CHAPTER XX.

Abouna Tederos—Magnificent view—St. Theodore's abode—His miracles—Rock water-tank—Abyssinian priests—St. Michael's Eve at Addy Harisho—Religious dance and song—Pugilism—Tropical nights—Curious matrimonial arrangement—The jungle on fire—A predicament—Prompt measures—Serious consequences of the fire—Grandeur of the spectacle—Attempt to blow up a town—The idiot Maghovai—A hunting party—A nocturnal alarm—Buffalo-skin shields—Aito Merratch's mistake and narrow escape—Merit of killing a buffalo—Lame conclusion of the hunt—Departure for Adoua.

I WAS very near running away from Rohabaita without saying a word about the prettiest spot in the whole province. Winding up still higher among the hills, after an hour's climb from Addy Harisho you reach the little hamlet and church dedicated to 'Abouna Tederos (St. Theodore), the patron saint of Rohabaita. The village, which consists only of two or three houses, the church, and a long shed or hut used by a few shrivelled monks as a monastery, is built on a large rock, which appears almost to have detached itself from the remainder of the mountain, having communication with it by only one side, which descends gradually, and forms a gully with the slope of the hill behind it. The remaining three faces of the rock fall in abrupt precipices, those of the north and south sides terminating in deep ravines, while that of the east overhangs the valley of Mareb. Nothing can exceed the magnificence of the view which this position commands. Imagine yourself standing on the brink of the precipice: a perpendicular rock of about thirty feet is immediately beneath you; while beyond the base of this, the surface is more broken, and interspersed with a few shrubs, and some of the stiff-growing *Euphorbia*, for a depth of above a hundred feet. Thence, still descend.

ing, innumerable masses of stone of every size and shape, and in places overgrown with bushes, form a slope, which, though not so steep, is almost as inaccessible as the former, and extends from the base of the solid cliff till it loses itself among the undulations which form the upper boundaries of the valley of the Mareb. Glancing over the dark green of the uncultivated but fertile valley, through the middle of which the river, as seen from that distance, appears like a winding silver thread, the eye rests for a moment on the mountain of Medevai Tabor rising abruptly to the right, and from its shape, which is square, like a box, forming a strange contrast with the rounded outline of the grey hills of Serawi beyond it. In the extreme distance may be seen those of Simyàta and D'Abba Garima, beyond Adoua, which in colour appear like faint blue clouds on the horizon, though, from the clearness of the atmosphere, their outline loses none of its distinctness even at so great a distance.

The village received its name from having been the chosen residence of its patron Saint when on earth, and the scene of his principal miracles. On the face of the rock is the little hole wherein he lived ; it is barely high enough for a person to squat in ; and the marks worn in the stone by the crown of his head, the soles of his feet, and his elbows, are still shown. His miracles were many. Among others, a leopard ate up his son (I hope I am right in giving him a son : I don't know whether his being a father would preclude his being a saint : however, it was a youth nearly related to him, if I remember the story right). The Saint, returning home, missed him, and set out in search of him. When in the forest he called aloud to him three times, and at the third time the leopard appeared : on seeing him, the Saint guessed how the matter stood with the unfortunate youth ; but, nothing discouraged, he coolly ordered the beast to return him safe and sound. Now this was rather difficult, as the leopard had no doubt half digested him : nevertheless, so great was the Saint's power, that the boy left the leopard's maw none the worse, perhaps rather the better, for having been dismembered and reconstructed.

Being asked where a church should be built, the Saint threw his staff, desiring the inquirers to build where they found the staff had fallen. After many days it was found several miles off in Serawi, on the other side of the valley, exactly on the spot where now stands the church of Devra Mariam.

Many other wonderful stories were told me of his feats, but I have forgotten them. The most useful act attributed to him was, that he caused the rock below him to become hollow, in order to receive the rain-water. The hollow still exists, though I should strongly suspect it to be of Nature's construction; or, if the saint had a hand in its design, he must have been a clumsy fellow, for with half the labour he might have made a place capable of containing twice the quantity of water. As it is, however, it fills every year during the rains, and, receiving nearly the whole of what falls on that side the rock, contains sufficient water for the inhabitants during the greater part of the dry season; after which time they dig in the sandy valley at the back of the village.

The Abyssinian priests are a jolly set. One might fancy that the author of the *Ingoldsby Legends* had made a stay at St. Theodore's before writing the '*Lay of Saint Nicholas*.'

" And Peter the prior and Francis the friar
Sat each with a napkin under his chin :
But Roger the monk got excessively drunk,
So they put him to bed, and they tuck'd him in !"

Truly, barring the napkins, putting to bed, and tucking in, which all savour of the European, I could fancy I knew the persons he intended to describe.

I remember how St. Michael's Day was on one occasion passed at Rohabaita. Certain families give feasts on certain saints' days, much after the manner of Catholic countries in Europe. Now it was my host Waddy Hil's custom to "hang out" in honour of St. Michael. Accordingly, for a day or two before his anniversary, all hands were busy in erecting a large "dass," or booth, made of green boughs of

trees, close to our compound; and much beer and mead having been prepared, bread baked, and animals got ready for slaughter, on the day appointed the guests arrived, a motley group of priests and scribes, soldiers and women.



Dance of the Holy Men.

By the way, a large party was the evening before collected at St. Theodore's church, where they kept it up, praying, dancing, and drinking, till morning, and few retired sober

even then. The evening at Addy Harisho was passed nearly in the same manner. I had been out on the Mareb all the morning, and when I arrived, late in the afternoon, the guests had been some time assembled. On entering, the spoony-sentimental way in which I was welcomed by all the party—men and women coming forward by dozens to embrace me—was at once a proof that they were all very drunk. I went and sat down by Waddy Hil. He said little, but from the peculiarly facetious smile which accompanied whatever he did say, even when discussing the most serious subjects, I soon saw that he was but little better than his neighbours. An old priest came up to me and offered, on the part of himself and his brethren, to perform, if I pleased, the religious dance and song used by them on such occasions. I never shall forget their ludicrous efforts to appear graceful, at the same time staggering every step; while the expression of devotion they affected to assume was reduced to a languid smile and thickening eyelids, expressive of nothing but liquor. A hiccup or two occasionally interfered with the solemn words they were chanting; and the stately movements they had begun with changed gradually, and by degrees the dance became a reel, or rather reeling movement, the words only which accompanied it remaining solemn. At last an old priest (no doubt lost in fervour), suddenly forgetting the original chant, changed its words to those of a jovial drinking ditty: "Don't you stop the liquor, and I will dance for ever!" Instead of the marks of disapprobation from his fellow priests, they only burst into a loud laugh, and, declaring the entertainment to be changed for the better, all with one consent followed his example and his tune.

Shortly after this the amusements were diversified by a most undignified pugilistic encounter between a very short and thick scribe and a long elephant-hunter, a most singular pair for a duel. They were, however, soon separated, and the man of letters, who was the aggressor, was carried home by his friends, as, poor fellow! he could not walk. Not, I believe, that he had suffered much in the fight, for I saw him

receive only a few slaps on his reverend cheeks, one of which, though not administered very severely, brought him to the ground. Strange to remark, these occurrences did not at all seem to diminish the respect of the people for their spiritual pastors and masters.

As many of the party came from a considerable distance, the feast broke up early ; but in the course of the evening a few of the immediate neighbours, and some of those who, having come from a distant province, had been invited to pass the night with us, met again in the space between my huts and those of Waddy Hil. Our couches and mats were collected and spread on the ground, and the proceedings of the afternoon were in part recommenced, though in a more orderly way.

Oh ! if in England we had the bright, warm moonlight nights of the tropics ! Of all things that which I most regret is the enjoyment of sleeping out of doors in those lands where, for eight months in the year, not a cloud obscures the sky, and where the moon shines with a light which is of a brightness inferior only to that which it reflects. In Africa, when the moon is near the full, you can read as clearly as by day : and how delightful are the evenings then passed, either round the bivouac's fire in the forest, or near the merry dancing party of the young people in the village !

But to return to my narrative :—After our unsuccessful pursuit of the Barea from Addy 'Khawk'hat, I started for a village about three miles distant from our old quarters at Addaro. The hamlet where we took up our residence consisted only of three compounds, one of which had been ceded to me ; but, from the huts being totally out of repair, I had to rebuild them ; and the others belonged to the family of Aito Hablo, a farmer, and proprietor of the land. As a rather curious point in the arrangement of matrimonial affairs in this country, I may mention that one of the compounds was occupied by Aito Hablo with a new wife and family, while the other was the dwelling of his cast-off lady and her offspring. "

The soil there was of a very different nature and appear-

ance from that of Rohabaita, being highly fertile and gently undulating; while on the uncultivated parts of it, instead of being covered with rock and jungle, grew long thick grass, the greater part of which during the summer became perfectly dry like hay, leaving only a green strip in the low places near water. This same grass, however, useful as it was—the dry for thatching and the green for provender—became the cause of our being nearly burnt to death, and our houses destroyed. A hunter, either accidentally or mischievously, set fire to the jungle near Addàro. The wind causing it to spread during the night, we were awakened in the morning by the crackling of the flames quite near to us. On rising, we found that the stream of fire had all but encircled the hillock on which our huts were placed. Long before we had time to look about us we were absolutely hemmed in on every side, apparently without a chance of escape; and the fire was mounting the slope gradually. The current of air on each side of the hill had, it appeared, carried it on faster there than on its slopes; besides which, bits of the hill-side having been cultivated, and the grass being a little thinner, in consequence of the poorer quality of the soil, it did not progress so fast as on the plain, though still it came on rapidly enough to cause us considerable alarm, as the huts being roofed entirely with sticks and straw, and the grass coming up close to our fences, which were of dry thorns, they were sure of being burnt to the ground unless some prompt measures were determined on to check the progress of the flames. Necessity is the mother of invention; and in much shorter time than I have taken to write it, large green boughs of trees, which providentially grew close round us, were torn off, and each man of our party, armed with one, made himself useful, working with the energy and determination of men who strive, not for honour and glory, but for life. Part of them, assisted by Hablo's women and children, lit counter-fires all round the village, as the shortest means of clearing a space, and prevented the flames extending farther than was wished by beating them down with the boughs as fast as they acquired

too much power. I headed the remainder of the party in an endeavour to retard as much as possible the approach of the great conflagration. Stripped stark naked (with the exception of a bit of skin or leather, which some of the more modest of the party picked up and wrapped round their loins), we made rushes at the flames whenever a lull of the wind allowed us to approach them, and, by beating them with the boughs, in some measure impeded their progress till the space was cleared and the huts were out of danger. Once, however, two of us were sadly near catching it. I and one of my servants happened to rush at the fire at an unlucky moment; for a breeze rising drove the flames towards us just as we got near them, and we were badly scorched. The Abyssinian, poor fellow! was weakly, and what from the burning, and a cold he took from dawdling about after thus heating himself, he was laid up for a long time. I got off better, being only disabled from wearing clothes for a little while, as the skin of my right shoulder and leg came off in blisters, and the hair of the right side of my head, eyebrow, eyelash, and moustache was singed off. The worst part of my sufferings was the injury of the optic nerve of my right eye, from which I have never recovered, and which has totally spoilt my rifle-shooting—a loss much felt by me, as it was about the only thing in the world I could do well. Formerly I managed occasionally to shoot from my left shoulder—a habit which I found useful in stalking, as in some positions you must necessarily expose yourself before you can bring your right shoulder forward. Now that I am obliged to trust to my left alone, I find it a very poor substitute for the right, and altogether useless for running shots.

This accident, and the loss of a good deal of standing corn, were the amount of our casualties. A hamlet near us suffered considerably more: not only the crops, but several detached houses, were entirely destroyed, and two men and a child lost their lives. The remainder of the village was with difficulty saved; and yet I could not understand how it was they did not run for it, as the flames never entirely

surrounded them as they did us ; but I fancy they had a much smaller proportion of men to the size of the village than we had, for we mustered very strong—all my servants and several friends luckily being with me at the time.

When the danger was past, and we had time to look about us, the retreat of the flames was a most magnificent sight, almost repaying the danger and trouble they had caused us. Below was the blackened foreground, bounded by a vast line of fire, which marched on like an army, clearing everything before it—throwing up occasionally, as it were, standards of flame, blue, red, or yellow ; while, as if to give effect to the whole by putting it in relief, the smoke caused the sky, naturally too bright, to assume a dark purple hue for some distance above the horizon. I have witnessed many horribly grand spectacles of this nature : of all, I consider this to be the one which partook most of the grand. As for the horrible, I know of none more so than the attempt by a desperado to blow up the whole of a town where I was living at the time, and the population of which, including the garrison, amounted to some thirty or forty thousand souls. 'This happened about three years after the time of which I am now writing, at Khartoum, the capital of the Egyptian provinces of Soudan.

During my stay at Tokhulimny I made several excursions in the neighbourhood, and did a good deal in the visiting line, having many fashionable acquaintances. Aito Merratch also paid me frequent visits, usually accompanied by an idiot, named Maghovai,—a poor fellow whom he took about with him as an occasional source of amusement. Merratch treated him more kindly than most of the people, and he appeared much attached to him. The boys of the neighbourhood used to plague him terribly ; and, though usually quiet, at times he would get very mad and mischievous. I remember his once making a furious charge at my favourite mule, with a lance which he had picked up from one of the people, and he would no doubt have killed her had he not been disarmed ; which indeed was effected with some difficulty. His tongue, however, was more often mischievous

than his hands. His usual practice on entering a house was to go to the women and frighten them till they lent him a water-pipe, with a proper supply of tobacco, fire, &c. When it was all nicely arranged, he would take it, and sitting down for a moment smoke it quietly: then suddenly starting up, either in real or well-assumed rage, deliberately smash it to atoms, and commence insulting and abusing the women most grossly for having offered him so fragile an article. This was what Merratch enjoyed. But his great forte was slandering the character of all the ladies of the neighbourhood. Before Merratch he would particularly abuse the wife of his rival, Gabro Wahed: then he would wander on to the frailties of all the other ladies, generally making them out to be in love with him, and saying how one praised his eyes, another his teeth, and so on; and, often forgetting himself, he would add the name of Merratch's lady to the list.

Having observed that his paroxysms increased according as he had been baited by the boys or laughed at by the men, I thought that with proper management he might be much improved: so I begged Merratch to let me have him for a while, saying that I would try to cure him. He consented gladly, and I took him. In a short time he grew very fond of me, and could scarcely be induced to leave me. I forbade any one to laugh at him, or to speak to him otherwise than to a sensible person. Even when he made any absurd mistakes in the little jobs I set him to do, I punished severely any of the people who might happen to titter. The first point I gained was to induce him to wear clothes., This I managed by flattering his personal appearance,—a point wherein, like most of his countrymen, he was very susceptible. Then I taught him to hold a gourd for me to wash my hands in; afterwards to accompany me and carry game; till, before leaving me, he became quite steady and tolerably reasonable; and I often, for the sake of trying him, sent him on errands,—as, for example, to change a dollar for cloth. He managed these very well: the only peculiarity he exhibited was that of being absurdly particular, never

accepting in exchange a piece of cloth that had a speck of dirt on it. When I returned him to Merratch, he insisted that I had wrought this wonderful cure in him by means of medicine or charms. I explained to him how it had been done, and begged of him to continue the treatment, pointing out to him the features in the poor fellow's character by working upon which he might be led, namely, by flattering him, by inducing him to believe himself the depositary of great confidence and trust, and by asking his advice and appealing to his good sense in matters of counsel. To Merratch's credit be it said, he no doubt managed the poor fellow as well as, or better than I had done, for a year after Maghovaï came to pay me a visit in the place where I then was, and brought with him a small present of bread, the produce of his own cultivation. Though not over bright in his conversation, he was altogether rational. He said that I and Merratch were his father and mother, explaining his simile in a very ingenious but rather Oriental manner, and cried bitterly on my telling him that I was about to leave the country, and that he could not come with me.

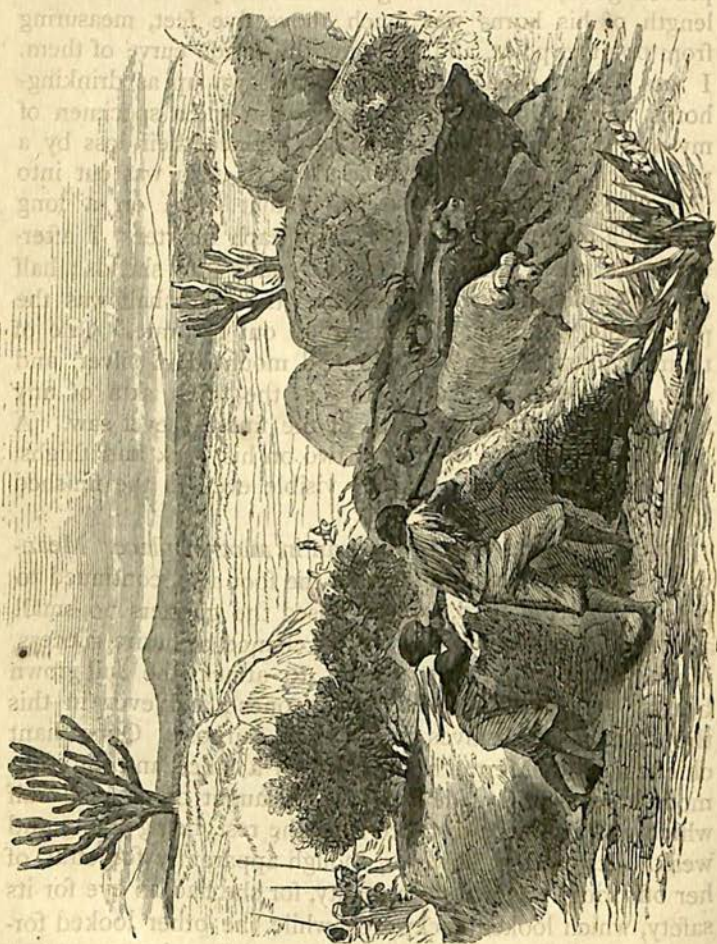
Aito Merratch was very civil to me, and did all in his power to render my stay in his province agreeable. One day he got up a hunting party on a large scale for my amusement, or rather I fancy for the sake of my seeing him with "his tail on," as Evan dhu Maccombich would have called it. The meeting-place was the frontier in the direction of Zagger. After a long and tedious journey we arrived at the rendezvous, which was a slight elevation on the borders of a vast plain, covered with small trees and bushes. During the evening and following morning many stragglers arrived, till at last we mustered about two hundred persons,—a most unsportsmanlike party; in every respect different from what we had been accustomed to on the Mareb. Clean white garments shone in the sun, pretty enough to look at, but very likely to scare away the game. Several rode on mules, with jingling "soulissies" round their necks. Three only were mounted on horseback; eleven had guns; and the rest were armed with lances, swords, and spears. Altogether a

more noisy assemblage was never met with. Merratch himself evidently knew about as much of woodcraft as a pig does of navigation ; and I foresaw that, though we might have good fun as a picnic party, we should see but little real sport. The day after our arrival was spent in looking out for signs. Many traces of buffalo were lighted upon, and it was determined that we should follow them up next day. Accordingly we had a good supper, and disposed ourselves for passing the night. The people all lay in a circle, the space in the centre of which was occupied by Merratch, myself, Habto Georgis (his chief councillor), and my principal servant Saïd. About midnight a little boy got up and left the camp, either to fetch water or for some other purpose, and on his return was attacked furiously by the dogs (of which a whole tribe had followed us). The cries of the lad and the barking of the dogs awoke the party, who, having before turning in seen the fires of the Baïrea on the hills opposite to us, immediately concluded that the disturbance was caused by an attack from them. A magnificent scene ensued. The men had laid themselves down, as is usual, with their weapons near their hands, and their shields for pillows ; and now, in the dark and hurry, great confusion took place in the endeavour to find out the rightful owners of these articles. Two men near me got hold of one lance, one having taken it by the shaft, and the other by the head. Unluckily for the fingers of the latter, it happened that the disputed weapon was one of the broad, flat, sharp-edged kind, called " hellas ;" and, as both parties pulled furiously, his hands were in consequence sadly lacerated. Seven of the eleven gunners had matchlocks, and they were busy blowing their matches, which at such a moment, with the usual luck of persons in a great hurry, they of course could not induce to ignite. The remainder of the men, having armed themselves, were trying to get up a little courage, by stamping about and screaming out their war-cries. Poor Aïto Merratch was completely overcome. Trembling from head to foot, he betook himself to his prayers,—a most comforting resource doubtless in all times of danger and trial,

but rather out of place when his example and presence were required for action. I could hear him repeat the Creed (according to the Abyssinian ritual), and a great many other formulæ ; but though he continually prayed to spiritually "overthrow the Devil," yet he seemed to have very little inclination to attempt the overthrow of the devils incarnate whom he imagined to be on the point of butchering the whole party. Shortly after, the cause of disturbance being cleared up, things were restored to their former tranquillity, but not until the poor boy had received a good thrashing, and one or two of the warriors had vented their rage on several of the faithful dogs by spearing them.

Next day we started to follow the trail, but it was not till the afternoon that we made any encouraging discoveries in the hunting line. About three o'clock, however, a horseman who had been ahead brought us the welcome news that he had seen buffaloes not far off. After some consultation it was arranged that parties with the gunners should station themselves in the different defiles where they were most likely to pass, and the remainder, with the horsemen, endeavour to head them, and drive them towards us. Accordingly I and several others took our position in the most likely place, and awaited their coming with some anxiety. After nearly half an hour's patience, we were on the point of deciding that the project had failed, when a distant sound was heard as of a squadron of horse artillery charging, and presently part of the herd passed close to where we were concealed. Not a lance was thrown by any one of the spearmen ; all appeared anxious to get as much out of the way as possible. Out of six guns, the explosion of two huge elephant matchlocks only was heard, for they entirely drowned the paltry crack of an ounce rifle which played them a tenor accompaniment. Two bulls fell ; and each of the Abyssinians who had fired rushed forward to claim his. The huge animals were with some difficulty killed, as neither of them had been "dropped cold ;" and it was not till this business was over that, to the confusion of one of the would-be successful hunters, I thanked him for the assistance he had

rendered me, and promised him a reward if he would also help me in flaying and cutting up the animal we had just succeeded in mastering. The man stared. I only answered him by pointing to the wound. The ball was soon extracted,



Buffalo Drive.

and proved to be an ounce of good soft lead, instead of the inch and a half of iron bar with which the Abyssinians load their pieces. The hunter's glory was taken down a peg or

two, but he had the good sense to make as pretty a face as possible ; and the flaying, butchering, and eating were soon got over. (The greater part was eaten raw.) The meat proved good, the bull being a remarkably fine one. The length of his horns was much above five feet, measuring from point to point, and following the inside curve of them. I was foolish enough to have them sawn up as drinking-horns, and, as I never again procured so fine a specimen of my own shooting, I was obliged to replace their loss by a pair which I afterwards purchased. His skin was cut into four pieces, which were so heavy that when on a long journey a man was required to carry each quarter. I afterwards had them sent to Axum and made into shields ; half (that is two shields) were mine, and the other half was the pay of the workman. They turned out first-rate. One of them I gave away, the other I had mounted in silver, and sent it home to England. It was the finest skin of any animal I ever killed, and one of the finest I ever saw. A lion's paw had left a scratch or two on his back and thighs, so deep that they were slightly visible even in the finished shields.

One female was killed by a man in another place. Meanwhile the horsemen, and some of the foot also, continued to pursue the flying herd, which caused the gunners no small annoyance, as it deprived us of all chance of future success. Moreover they did not attempt to attack the full-grown beasts, only aiming at the young ones ; and even in this they fatigued themselves almost to no purpose. Our valiant chieftain, Aito Merratch, armed with a lance and an enormous horse-pistol, made a furious onslaught on a small calf which was at a little distance from the rest, being young and weak. Its mother, however, though apparently forgetful of her offspring, was not so in reality, for she had an eye for its safety, which looked backwards, while the other looked forwards for her own ; and just as the gallant horseman got near the calf, and was preparing to throw his lance, she wheeled about and made at him with her head down to the ground. The lance fell harmless from his hand, and he

turned about too ; or rather (as he afterwards assured us) it was his horse that willed it thus, not he. However, he galloped away without even discharging his pistol, for the turn he made was so sudden that he with difficulty kept his seat. Fortunately he managed to stick on ; for had he come to the ground the odds would have been rather against his ever getting up again, unless perhaps assisted by the horns of his female assailant.

One man on foot had managed to catch a little calf, only three or four days old, which, when the herd was first started, had run only a few paces, and then stood quite still. He dragged it on towards the spot where we were standing, in order that his chief might have the glory of killing it. Be it known that the killing of a buffalo counts in Abyssinia as equal in merit to killing twenty men ; and on this account almost every great man, and often even his children, can count a good many, as it only requires that they should be the first to wound the animal, however slightly, which they generally do with a gun or a light javelin thrown from a distance ; and then it matters little who really kills it, the credit being always attributed to him who first draws blood. On this occasion, however, the glory of slaying the little calf, while it was sucking its captor's thumb, and then boasting as if he had killed a score of warriors, was not destined for Merratch. A soldier, who probably had his laurels yet to gain, and wished to procure them with as little trouble as possible, maddened by the sight of so glorious a chance, rushed up and drove his lance into the unfortunate little victim of human vanity.

Merratch happened to come up shortly after this deed of valour had been performed, and joined with the other man in abusing the soldier, till I feared lest they might serve him as he had treated the animal ; but, as is usual with squabbles in this country, it ended in the useless expenditure of a great many hard words."

During the next day we saw some giraffe and elephants at a distance, but failed in our attempts to get near them. A gnu, two of the antelopes here called "tora" (hartebeeste is,

I believe, the Cape name), and some smaller game, were all that we killed.

Thus ended the only great hunt I ever saw in Abyssinia ; and I may say that it turned out as I anticipated—great fun, but very poor sport. On our return to Addàro most of the party got tipsy at Merratch's expense : and then every man betook himself to his own habitation. I remained in the neighbourhood for some time, and then, by slow degrees, made for Adoua, remaining a week or two with each of my friends at Mai Quollaw, Aghabsarai, and other places. Nothing out of the common occurred during that period, except a few very uninteresting fights about cutting grass, and other absurdities, with the inhabitants of some of the villages we passed, in one of which I got my skull cracked, and one of my vertebræ knocked out of its proper place by a club, till I arrived at Devra Sina, a mountain near the capital, in some huts near the foot of which I remained till the rainy season set in.

CHAPTER XXI.

Motives for visiting Addy Àbo—The Bideles—The Barea—Oubi's last campaign against the Barea—Failure of the Apha Negous and other chiefs—Superiority of the Barea as warriors—Adam Chourry—Ali Welda Mariam—Oubi's return.

IN a former chapter I stated the principal motives which led me to turn my footsteps northward, and visit the maligned and little frequented province of Addy Àbo, instead of following the usual, but rather hackneyed caravan route to Gondar. I say hackneyed, because from the time of the Portuguese missionaries to the present day every traveller who has visited this part of Æthiopia has taken it as his route and described it in his journal. It will be remembered that one of my motives was to visit, if possible, or at any rate to obtain some information concerning the people called Shangalla or Barea, whose depredatory incursions on Rohabaita have frequently been mentioned in the last few chapters.

I had, as I thought, arranged a very neat plan of passing from Rohabaita, north-eastward, to the semi-independent provinces of Dembelas and Tokhoul, and residing on their frontier till I could make friends with some of the Bideles. These are a people whose country lies to the east of the Barea and north of Dembelas, and who resemble the former in their habits. They are frequently at war with one or both of their neighbours, while at other times they are peaceful, and frequent the markets of both countries.

I should have found means of entering their territory, and, after making their acquaintance, have passed peaceably with their recommendation into that of the Barea. But fate decided it otherwise, for just as all my plans were matured

and I was about to set off for the north, they were knocked on the head by Oubi's declaring his intention of attacking "the slaves," and making them pay for the numerous murders and robberies they had of late years perpetrated in his provinces of Addy Àbo, Tsembela, Àsgaddy, and Wal-dabba. In the last they had pillaged a few monasteries and slaughtered a good number of holy men, and the Church called on Oubi for vengeance. I hoped, however, by means of the "razzia" itself, unsatisfactory though such means always are, to gain some insight into their manners; yet, at the same time, I anticipated but little, knowing that in all probability the invaders would seldom see anything of the natives except when in the act of fighting. And the event proved that my anticipations were better founded than my hopes.

Bàsenà, or, as the Abyssinians call it, "Addy Barea," (country of the slaves,) is situated to the north of the kingdom of Tigrè. It is bounded on the north by Tàka and the Hallengas, on the west by the colonies of Tokrouri and Arabs who have settled on the Abyssinian frontier, and on the east by the Bidéles, Tsàda Koustan, and other tribes. It may however be considered as naturally bounded in these two latter directions by the rivers Taccazy and Mareb. A considerable tract of uninhabited neutral ground lies between it and the different parts of Abyssinia to which it is contiguous; but more or less intercourse is maintained between its inhabitants and those of the adjacent countries to the north and east.

As regards their mode of government, I could never hear of any supreme monarch, but obtained the names of several chiefs, some of whom ruled over large provinces, while the sway of others was limited to a village or two. For instance, Quodille was named to me as chief "on the Taccazy," and on my inquiring I was given to understand that his government extended for a great distance along the bank of that river; while Fàris had the village of Maidàro, and Àli, Alloumo, both on the Mareb.

From a prisoner taken in the war I learnt the names

of some of their towns and villages, and a few more from an Abyssinian who had been captured by them and contrived to escape; they amount altogether to thirty in number. But beyond this list and a few other trifles relating to their costume, food, &c., neither of the men was able to assist me much. The Barea, from our ignorance of his language, could not be made to understand anything about distances or the direction of places; and the Abyssinian, when captured, did not know the way he had gone, nor that by which he returned, and all he could tell as regarded distances was that he had been taken to a town called Shelfa, whose chief was named Ammou; that he had escaped thence and returned to his home at Amba Abraham (in the southern part of Walkait) in twelve days. I judge from this that the place may have been eight days' journey, or 160 miles, for doubtless he lost a third of the time he took from being obliged to keep out of sight, and from ignorance of the road. He told me that he had followed a south-by-westerly direction in his flight.

As for the dress of the Barea, it consists solely of a small cloth wrapped round the body, not more than a third the size of the Abyssinian "quarry;" in fact, nearly resembling that of the poorer Shohos and Arabs of the coast, both in regard to shape and size and the fashion of wearing it.

Their arms are the same as those of their neighbours of Tàka and the Nubian Arabs in general, consisting of a shield, two-edged sword, and spear, with a difference in the shape of the shield, which, instead of being long and pointed at both ends, like those of Sennaar, is small and round, with a boss for the hand, like those of the coast tribes.

The swords are of European manufacture, mostly German, and some of very ancient date, though even now-a-days many are made in Europe and sent over to Egypt to be sold to the caravans coming from the different parts of the interior. They are long, broad, and two-edged. There are various patterns of them, some with a single broad groove down the whole length of the blade, others with three

small grooves reaching only a few inches, and the remainder plain ; others again are perfectly plain, except some small device which is rudely engraved on them.

The first of these three patterns is called "Maghreby" or Moorish (literally western), and is usually ornamented with a sun, moon, or stars engraved on the blade. The second is most esteemed, and is called Doukwourry : a lion passant is generally the device of this pattern. They tell in Abyssinia of one taken from the Barea or Sennàris (I forget which) whose point can be bent round in a circle so as to pass the hilt by a good deal : and another is said to be in the possession of the Sultan of Darfur, which he can wind up like the main-spring of a watch, and by means of a catch, keep it in that form till he may require to use it, when, touching a spring, it flies out straight with a sound like a silver bell.* The truth of this story I do not vouch for ; I only relate it to show what are considered "points" in a sword by the Barea, Arabs, &c., in contradistinction to the Abyssinians.

The blade of a two-edged sword such as we are describing should be about a yard long, three fingers broad, bright without looking new, and as pliant as possible, provided that it return perfectly straight. For such a one the Arabs would give anything, the Abyssinians nothing.

These swords are mounted with cross handles, like those of the Crusaders ; and who knows but the fashion may have been introduced into the East by them ? The Arabs often ornament them very handsomely with red leather sheaths, stitched with green, and massive silver plates and knobs on the handles, with rings of the same metal for the straps by which they are carried.

These last words require some explanation : the fact is, that this kind of sword is never suspended either by slings or frogs, as with us, nor yet worn buckled to the waist as in Abyssinia, but is carried by means of a single short strap

* A Toledo blade of nearly as great flexibility was, I believe, shown at the Great Exhibition.

fixed at each extremity to the sword rings, through which the left arm is passed, so that the sword hangs under the arm, either from the shoulder or from the elbow as the wearer chooses, though the former is most usually adopted.

I have seen several of these swords with Arabic and even Æthiopic inscriptions on the blade, and have heard of one belonging to some prince at Gondar which was blessed by the Pope and sent by him to a former Emperor, and which bears an inscription to that effect in Latin as well as in Arabic and Æthiopic. The Abyssinian chiefs had formerly a number of these weapons carried before them in scarlet cloth bags on state occasions; but this custom is now getting to be considered old-fashioned, at any rate in Tigrè, where it is seldom practised.

In regard to the religion of the Barea, the Abyssinians, for the most part, assert them to be Pagans. This I have reason for doubting; they practise circumcision, and many of them are called by Mussulman names; hence I should fancy that they are probably in origin half-converted Mohammedans, who know nothing whatever of the tenets of the faith they profess.

They cultivate the dokhon (holcus dockna?) in common with many of the more westerly tribes in the same latitude; the Tigrèans, who do not grow this corn, look upon it as a sort of curiosity, and call it "nai Barea daghousha," or the slaves' daghousha. The Abyssinians give very exaggerated accounts of the animal food used by this people, asserting that snakes, rats, and lizards are their favourite meats, but from this I only conclude still more strongly that the Barea do not object to eat many things commonly used by the neighbouring Mohammedan tribes, such as camel's flesh, locusts, &c., but which are looked upon as very unclean by the Abyssinian Christians. In fact, though the Moslem religion interdicts the use of certain animals as food, there are many of the more ignorant tribes of the far south of Nubia who have no scruples about partaking of them.

The Barea are very brave, strong, active, and hardy, and

were they a little more civilized, or were they even to unite in any force, would prove very dangerous enemies to Tigrè. Still, however, I doubt if civilization, unless carried out to its fullest extent, improves a savage race in any particular. These fellows are, I believe, not only superior to their more civilized neighbours, whether of the north or south, in animal and physical qualities, but also, from all accounts, are more honest and trustworthy. In regard to any acquaintance with modern improvements in the art of killing their fellow men they are remarkably wanting. For instance, they fear horsemen very much less than foot soldiers, imagining that the former must be old or infirm men who, not being able to keep up with their comrades on foot, require to be carried by horses; while in reality, an Abyssinian who owns a horse must be either a rich man, or a distinguished warrior, whom his chief has rewarded by the gift of one.

So in their campaigns, whenever the Bâza* are met by cavalry they amuse themselves at their expense by facetiously plucking handfuls of grass and holding them towards the horses, and calling them "Tish, Tish, Tish," &c. They appear never able to understand how the fire-arms of their adversaries kill them. Occasionally it has been noticed that when a man has fallen among them by a gun-shot wound, his neighbours will assist him up, imagining him to have stumbled; should life be extinct they manifest their astonishment at finding him dead from some unseen cause; and when on examining his body they discover the small round hole made by the ball, they will stare at it, poke their fingers into it, and absolutely laugh with surprise and wonder. One or two guns have been found amongst them, probably taken from hunters on the Mareb, or from some village they may have pillaged, but these were carried as ornaments, for no powder was

* I have most frequently used the word Barea to express this people. Bâza is their more proper name, and used by the Arabs and other of their neighbours, probably from their country, "Bâsena." Barea in the Abyssinian languages merely means "slave."

found with any of them, nor did they appear to consider that at all as a necessary accompaniment to a gun. Notwithstanding all these deficiencies in the art of warfare, one of these savages in general proves more than a match for two ordinary Abyssinians. To sum all, I might say that the Bâza are in manners and customs not unlike some of the wilder Nubian tribes, only about three or four centuries behind them in civilisation.

I shall now add a short sketch of the last campaign made by Oubi against them.

The prince left his camp at Howzayn in the month of Hedâr or October, 1844, the rainy season being then completely terminated ; and, proceeding to Adoua, encamped on the plains of Maidelâty, distant about a mile and a half from the capital. Here he remained for a fortnight, when he again proceeded northward, and passing by Axum and the Shiré road to Addyâbo, crossed the frontier, and, after some days' march through the uninhabited neutral ground, encamped in the enemy's country to rest his troops. The camp was formed in two divisions, Prince Shétou, Oubi's second son, having pitched his tents a considerable distance ahead of his father. The first movement was made by the Baréa, who attacked Shétou's camp ; but the enemy being in small numbers, and the Abyssinians on the look-out, they were easily beaten off. On this occasion Oubi showed an instance of that superstitious belief in the revelations of seers by which he, in common with almost all his countrymen, allows himself to be guided, even though it may induce him to act contrary to the dictates of his own judgment or of common sense. Hearing of the attack and its repulse, he immediately sent off a messenger to his son, ordering him on no account to follow up his success by pursuing the enemy, as it had been foretold to him that the day would be unlucky to any one setting out on an expedition. After remaining in the same place for a week, both camps were advanced a few days' journey towards the interior, when a central place having been fixed upon, they pitched again. The object now

was to send out parties in various directions to kill, take, burn, destroy, &c., whomever or whatever of the enemy might fall in their way.

One of the first of these parties was headed by several chiefs of distinction, viz., Apha Negous Welda Georgis, Bejerandy Cafty, Aito Baraky, and others. They mustered very strong, and set off in quest of a town or large village of which they had been told the direction. But from ignorance of the country and inability to find water, the supply they carried with them having failed, they suffered sadly from fatigue and thirst, and not only missed their object altogether, but, getting into disorder, divided into two parties, one of which, with much difficulty and the loss of several men missing, managed to return to the camp, while the other was entirely lost, having perished either from want and fatigue or by the swords of the Barea.

The Apha Negous himself had nearly succumbed to these difficulties, and was for throwing himself on the ground and remaining to take his chance ; but Aito Baraky, who appears to have shown more courage and endurance than any of the rest, assisted and cheered him, and in the end succeeded in getting him home.

On mustering, Welda Georgis' party too was found to have suffered more than any other, numbering on its return scarcely one-fourth of what it did on starting. Oubi was much enraged at the failure of this expedition, and was only prevented by the intercession of his most influential men from administering to the Apha Negous and Bejerandy Cafty a good flogging as a reward for their sufferings in his service.

After this he sent a large force commanded by Remha, son of Welda Selassy, chief of Seloä, and the son of the Ag-gow chief, Weld Inchaël. They managed better than their precursors, for after a few days' absence they returned to the camp, having destroyed the town and taken a good booty in slaves and cattle. As a proof of the personal superiority of the Barea over the Abyssinians, it is said that Remha was one of the very few men who during the whole war killed a

Barea singly in hand-to-hand fight ; and this too he managed in a curious manner. Happening to meet one of the enemy, he charged him at full speed, lance in hand, intending doubtless to annihilate him ; the savage, however, stepping aside, avoided the blow, and by a dexterous back-stroke of his heavy two-edged blade, hamstrung his horse just as he passed. As a matter of course horse and horseman measured their length on the ground in a most undignified manner, which so tickled the fancy of the Barea that, instead of finishing his work on his recumbent enemy, he stood by, laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks. Remha, however, not being in such a mirthful mood, jumped up and drove his lance right through him, and he fell dead on the ground with the broad grin still on his countenance. Some of the Abyssinians assert disparagingly that individuals of the Barea on more than one occasion, finding that they were outnumbered, threw themselves flat down, hoping either to pass for dead or to lie concealed among the grass, and were easily butchered ; but, although such instances really did occur, the parties thus evincing fear were nearly always very young men or boys ; while on the other hand, the Abyssinians, if they chose, could relate many more anecdotes, in which it would be seen that their own conduct would in general suffer much if compared with that of their worse armed but braver enemies. For instance, on one occasion in the late war a foraging party from Oubi's camp, numbering seventeen brave Amhàra warriors, came upon a single Barea. He was an old man, but from his powerful make, commanding appearance, and the numerous strings of beads with which not only his person but his shield was decorated, was evidently a distinguished war chief, and one whose personal prowess had shown itself by his having come off victor in many fights. This, I should explain, was to be judged by the number of strings of beads he wore, each of which is, or is supposed by the Abyssinians to be, borne in commemoration of some victory over either man or beast. Well, our brave party surrounded the poor old fellow, expecting that he would endeavour to escape, and that some one of them

would find an opportunity of killing him while he was off his guard. But to their disgust and astonishment, instead of showing any symptoms of fear or desperation, he coolly sat down, and taking off one of his sandals (which, unlike the Abyssinians, these people wear), proceeded to sharpen his broad-sword on it. The Abyssinians walked off quietly without molesting him; and, in palliation of their cowardice, asserted that the position he occupied gave him great advantage over them, and that they had seen a large party of his people coming up in the distance, who would have reached the spot before they could have mastered him.

Another Barea was similarly surrounded by five or six Amhàra horsemen, but he had *really* got into a position which was unapproachable to mounted men. The Abyssinians did not care to dismount for the assault, but, getting as near as they could, with their horses, plied him from that distance with their light javelins; most of these he evaded or caught on his shield; but one, aimed better than the rest, struck him on the foot and wounded him slightly. The former lances he had collected under his arm, but, excited by the smart of the wound, he picked up the offending weapon, and cast it back at its owner, and with such effect that he either killed or wounded him, I forget which. This man, like the other, ended by getting off scot free, and carrying away the bundle of lances as trophies.

There was in Dejatch Shétou's camp a friend of mine called Adam Chourry, the latter name being a sobriquet which the loss of his tongue had gained him. The cause of his losing his tongue, or rather the best half of it, was that in former times he had been in the service of Ras Ali, whom he deserted to follow his rival and enemy Oubi, but being of a fickle disposition he got tired of his new master, and returned to the Ras, who welcomed him with a few nights' "durance vile," and then cut off part of his tongue, lest, I suppose, in his wanderings to other chieftains, he should be too free with that organ in reporting Ali's affairs to his neighbours. He could speak, however, though very indistinctly. After the loss of his tongue Ali sent him away to seek his fortune

elsewhere, so he engaged himself with young Dejatch Shétou. Shétou was very fond of him, for besides being a tall, handsome fellow, and withal a merry and amusing companion, he was one of the most powerful men in the country. After this introduction I may relate how he killed a Barea whom he chanced to meet. Adam threw a lance at him, but the nigger, after evading it, laid down his sword and shield, and by signs challenged our friend to wrestle. This he doubtless did, seeing Adam to be of unusual size and stature. Our hero gladly accepted the challenge, and, laying down his arms, each advanced to the struggle, which was of considerable duration, but ended by a fall, in which the burly Abyssinian was under. The Barea had a small knife bound on his arm, as is the custom with all the Nubian tribes. The Abyssinian had none, the custom of his country being not to use knives in any way, not always even for eating. Now, whether the savage refrained from drawing his weapon from motives of honour, or whether from forgetfulness, I know not; nor did he live long enough to tell, for Adam seized his nose with his teeth, and reminded him of the fact of his having a knife, by drawing it for him and cutting his throat with it. Another friend of mine, Ali Welda Mariam, killed two of the Barea; but though Welda Mariam is in reality a brave man and a good soldier, I cannot say that either of these victories was gained in a manner calculated to add at all to the laurels he had already won. One of the two especially gave him much trouble, for the Barea, although wounded in the shoulder at the very first onset, pressed hard on my friend, cutting with his broadsword an enormous gash in his tough buffalo-hide shield; and would, in all probability, have proved too much for him, had not two other Amhàras, seeing their comrade's awkward position, galloped up and killed his adversary from behind.

Ubi meanwhile kept gradually advancing, shifting his camp from place to place, and following up the plan he had begun, of sending out parties to ravage the country, though he himself never left the camp. In all he remained nearly two months in the "slave country," which he completely traversed

—so completely, indeed, as I believe to have, either intentionally or by mistake, committed some depredations in the border villages of the more northern tribes, which are claimed as tributaries by the Egyptian Government. He returned homewards by the way of the Bidéles and Dembelas, having sent his eldest son, Lemma, two or three days in advance of the main army. Dembelas and the neighbouring province of Tokhoul both nominally belong to Tigrè. They are, in fact, inhabited by Tigrèans, but, from their remote positions, are nearly independent, and seldom or never pay any tribute, knowing that it would not be worth the prince's while to send an army on purpose against them, and judging that they are of themselves sufficiently powerful to repel any minor invasion. When Lemma reached their country with the vanguard, they began to collect against him, but as soon as the main army appeared, led by Oubi himself, they assumed a more humble attitude, offering him their submission, and large presents of honey and other provisions. The army camped for a few days, and then, passing by Quohain, Seràuy, Goundet, and Aderbàty, arrived at Adoua in the month of Megavît (February), and pitched in the parish of Enda Mariam, just outside the town.

CHAPTER XXII.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

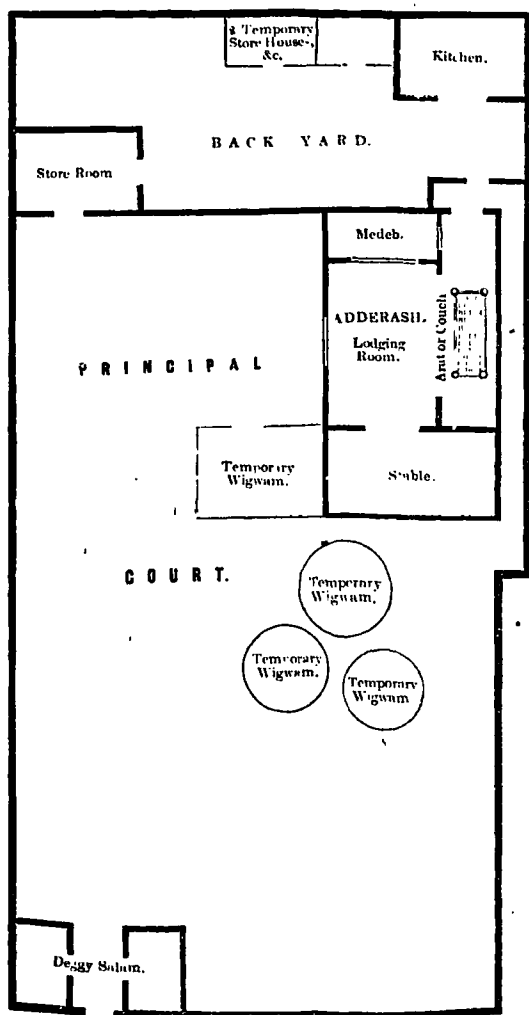
IN the month of June, 1844, after about nine months' absence, I returned to Adoua, with the intention of passing there the rainy season and the unhealthy period which follows it.

I took up my abode at the house of Belladta Sahly, in the Moslem quarter, which I continued to inhabit during the whole of my stay; and I cannot do better than commence my chapter of Manners and Customs by giving a description of an Abyssinian dwelling of the better class.

In Adoua the houses are, of course, of many descriptions, according to the condition of their respective owners. Those of the wealthy are, for the most part, square and flat-roofed, while the habitations of the poorer classes are principally round, and covered in with a conical roof thatched with straw. A description of the one I inhabited will give a tolerably correct idea of those of the former class.

The "Deggy Salâm" is the principal gate, in most houses the only one, by which you enter from the street. It is usually a covered entrance, with a small room on one or both sides, intended for the porter, "Agafâri Deggy Salâm," or other servants. Passing through this gate you enter a large court, about thirty yards square, in the front part of which are constructed one or more "gojjos," or wigwams of straw, for the accommodation of servants or strangers. In the right-hand corner, at the end of the yard farthest from the entrance, is the "adderash," or reception-hall. In the left-hand corner is another building, not so large, usually occupied by the "azzâdge," or house-steward, and which

has two doors—one leading into the great court, the other into a smaller one behind. In this building are kept the



Plan of my Town-House, &c., at Adoua.

supplies of provisions—corn, butter, honey, &c. The back court belongs entirely to the servants employed in cooking, brewing, &c., and may contain many small buildings, as each servant has his laboratory separate from the others. Thus there is one appropriated to the “tedge melkénia,” or brewer of mead, where he brews and afterwards locks up his jars of hydromel, as he is held responsible for it, and would not of course be able to answer for his thirsty fellow-servants’ honesty unless his charge were secured under lock and key. There is a separate room for a kitchen, another for storing wood, and another for grinding corn, pepper, &c. These



The “Adderash.”

duties, as well as the carrying of water, cooking, and making beer, invariably devolve on the women, while the making of mead is usually a man’s office.

The “adderash,” or reception-hall, is square or oblong; and when, as in my house, it is so large as to render it

difficult to find a sufficient number of good beams to reach across it, a plan is adopted which it has often struck me might be advantageously employed under similar circumstances even in Europe. The four corners are cut off by small beams laid across them, leaving an octagonal aperture in the middle, round which is built a wall about four or five feet high; this serves at once to heighten the room and lessen the width to be covered in. On this wall is placed the roof, which consists of boughs of trees laid crosswise over the beams; those of the date-palm, or Arkai (a sort of bamboo), are preferable: the latter especially are sometimes laid very neatly, and have a good appearance, but are little used, from their scarcity, in the mountain country. Some smaller boughs, with their leaves, are laid over these to fill up the crevices between them; and over the whole is spread a layer of earth and shingle, or pebbles, which is trodden, and sometimes sprinkled with water, to render it more solid; but every year it has to be renewed, just before the periodical rains. Wood-ashes are often added, as they are considered useful in rendering the whole water-tight. But the first heavy showers, though useful in settling down the roof and making it solid, increase its weight to such an extent that if the precaution is not taken of laying large flag-like pieces of stone along the top of the wall, immediately under the roof, to shoot off the water, the walls, built only of rough stones stuck together with mud, would soon dissolve when moistened by the rain, and yield to the superincumbent weight. The flags, however, which are found in the bed of the Assam, a brook flowing close to Adoua, not only cover, but project considerably beyond the wall, so as to prevent its being affected by any droppings or soakings from the roof. Notwithstanding these precautions, the fall of houses and enclosure walls is not an uncommon occurrence.

The interior of my dwelling may be considered as in three divisions. 1. The apartment occupied by myself, in which I sleep, eat, and receive my visitors. 2. The stable where

my mules are kept, and which opens into my room, there not being even a door to separate us. The mules stand with their heads towards me, and when I am eating *make eyes* at me to throw them bits of bread. 3. The "Médeb," a sort of couch, made of stones and plastered over with mud. I dignify it with the name of couch, though in reality it is nothing more than a part of the floor raised a step higher than the remainder, and extending the whole length of the room, and about five feet broad. This is separated from my apartment by a partition wall, in which is an opening of about eight feet broad. Should the house belong to a married man, this aperture is closed by a curtain drawn across it. The "médeb" is used by the ladies as a withdrawing-room; and from behind this curtain they peep at all that goes on in the reception hall upon festive occasions. On entering my apartment the stable is on the right hand, and the "médeb" on the left. In front is the "arat" or couch of the master of the house, placed also in a sort of alcove, like the "médeb," from which a small door passes to the left, opening into a private passage, by which the master can pass unobserved to the "médeb," or can effect his escape by a small door ("helfinia") to the back yard, which he often finds convenient for avoiding disagreeable visitors. The "arat" I have just mentioned is the couch or bed on which all town Abyssinians sleep; that is to say, all those who can afford the luxury. It is a solid framework of wood on four legs. A fresh raw hide is cut into strips, and these are stretched over the frame in and out, one crossing the other about an inch or rather more apart. The whole tightens in drying, and forms a rather hard, but very agreeable, cool bed. It is the custom always to sleep naked, but covered with the quarry or cotton cloth worn in the daytime; and the only bedding used is a piece of native-tanned leather, so that the air has free access from below. In these hot climates, however, it is more usual to sleep out of doors; the "arat" inside the house being used for cold or wet weather only, or for receiving visitors in the daytime. The

"médeb," in like manner, is covered with a piece of red leather, unless it happen that some wealthy dame has a carpet of Egyptian or Turkish manufacture. The pillows are mostly of wood, either a square block, about four inches long by three inches broad, a little hollowed on one side for the head ; or sometimes very tastefully shaped, the stand being neatly turned like a candlestick bottom. It is about seven or eight inches high, and the part on which the head rests is crescent-shaped. Some of the latter I have seen made of ivory and stained with henna. This form of pillow is very necessary to people who, from the custom of having their hair fancifully tressed and arranged and plastered with butter, could not lay their heads on any ordinary one, as they would saturate it with grease, besides seriously deranging their coiffure ; so they use the hollow wooden pillow, just laying their ear on it, and allowing their hair to hang freely behind. It is rather fatiguing at first to be obliged to keep one's head for a whole night in one position, and that indeed not the most comfortable ; but habit reconciles one to almost anything.

The floor of the reception-hall is carpeted with grass, which, in the first instance, is spread about half a foot deep all over the room ; and afterwards, whenever a visitor comes, a little fresh grass is politely strewed for him to sit on ; so that, in course of time, it accumulates to a considerable quantity. Now, this is one of the most disagreeable customs in the country ; for, as before and after meals, and on other occasions, the hands of every person in the room are washed by a servant's pouring water over them out of a drinking-horn, or any other utensil he may have at hand, you are obliged, from the want of a basin to receive the water, to scratch a small hole in the grass to prevent it splashing you. Add to this the beer and other liquids spilt there every day,* the manure left by the mules' feet in passing to and from the stable, and the cleaning out of the

* *Mingunt etiam.*

stable itself, which is done two or three times a week for the sake of the mules' feet, which would otherwise become softened by remaining in the wet. This last operation makes a great deal of dirt; for, having no buckets, they carry out the manure and filth in any sort of basket, gourd, or dish they can first lay hands on—dropping, of course, a good deal on the way. Thus the beautiful carpet becomes in time nothing less than a manure-heap in a high state of fermentation or putrefaction. Its surface, from the continual supply, keeps an appearance of freshness; but though the eye may be deceived for a time, the nose cannot be; and the smell becoming intolerable, the whole is obliged to be cleaned out. For at least a day after this operation the house must be left to ventilate, otherwise no one could live in it. Dirty as this practice is, we cannot much complain of it in the Abyssinians, as the old English custom of strewing the rooms with rushes entailed consequences that would probably now-a-days seem quite as disgusting.

Around the room cows' horns are fixed to serve as hooks, to which are suspended as ornaments shields, lances, guns, swords, skins, and other trophies of the chase. The shields have holes bored all round the edge, and the loop by which they are slung is changed occasionally from one to the other of these, especially in damp weather, to prevent the shield's losing its shape. The lances are kept in sheaths called "shiffaf," at the point of which is a loop, by which they are slung. The lances, like the shield, should swing free of the wall to keep them perfectly straight. The wood is frequently greased with butter to render it tough and pliant, and the iron is covered with a coating of suet to prevent its rusting. A great deal of fashion and fancy exists in the form of the lance-heads, and much trouble is taken to procure wood that is pretty in appearance, and at the same time of good quality. Large faggots of the young trees of which they are made are brought from the lower, or "quolla" country. These are burnt till the peel comes off; the wood is then

straightened and well dried, which is a very nice operation ; for if too much dried it becomes brittle ; if more burnt in one part than another it will never keep straight ; and if not sufficiently dried it is in equally bad condition. It is next greased, and hung over a fireplace for several months till it assumes a reddish-yellow tint, when it is considered handsome and well seasoned. It is then mounted and kept ready for use. The "Arkai," or "Shimmel," which has been before described as a sort of bamboo, is also used for lances. When a lance gets a little crooked it is usual to suspend it, with a large stone or other weight fastened to its "jämfo," or butt, in order to straighten it ; and I have seen a gun hung up in the same way with a stone to its muzzle. On inquiring of the man why he had done this, and being answered, "because it shot crooked," I replied, "Had you not better hang a stone to your eye, for perhaps it may see crooked ?" Some of my readers who may return from the field with empty bags on the 1st of September may probably like to try this sort of cure for their guns, or their eyes, as the case may be.

Besides the useful and ornamental articles already mentioned as suspended around the room, are the different horse and mule trappings, and the "wancha," or drinking-horns. The latter are kept in leather cases with a long strap, by which, when in the house, they are suspended to the wall, and, when on a journey, carried round the neck of a boy, to whom this office is assigned. The "mèdeb" is usually filled with the women's property—boxes for scents, small glass bottles for essential oils, and metal ones for the "köhly," or antimony, &c.

We must now take a survey of the kitchen. Imagine a small room about 10 feet long, 6 broad, and 8 high, with or without a window, according to circumstances, but more usually, as in mine, without one ; and at all events, without a chimney ; so that the smoke, which is almost always kept going, and that vigorously, finds the door the nearest exit ; and it may be easily conceived that the atmosphere is so

dense as to render it difficult for any one but a native to remain long in the room. Even the cook-women, who pass the greater part of the day in this smoke, never think of standing up to do their work, but always remain squatted as

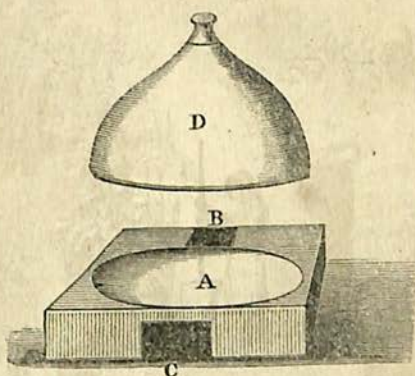


Kitchen-yard.

low as possible, either near the door or fire. Every article the room contains becomes, like the apartment itself, of a pure soot black. The kitchen utensils are the "magogo" or oven (if it may be so called), a few jars of different forms and sizes, according to the use they are intended to be put to—some with long necks and narrow mouths, for carrying and keeping water in; others with wide mouths and no necks at all, for holding the liquid dough of which the bread is formed,—and the earthen dishes or saucers in which the meat and other eatables are prepared and served up. The

"magogo" is an oblong building, three feet by four, and about a foot high. It is constructed of clay and small stones, with a space in the interior for a fire. The whole is covered with a circular slab of a sort of pottery work (being nearly the same material as that of which the dishes are formed) nicely polished on the upper surface (A), which is slightly concave, in order to receive more easily the liquid dough for the bread.

At the back is a hole (B) by which the smoke may escape, and in front a sort of doorway (C), by which the fire is lighted, and which, being placed exactly opposite the kitchen door, has always a draught of air between it and B to keep up a good fire.



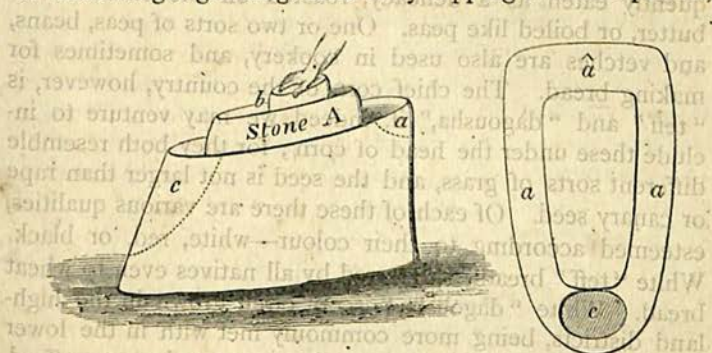
Magogo.

D is the cover, made of clay: it fits exactly the circular receptacle (A), and is used to keep out the smoke and dirt, and to retain the heat.

We will now pass into the store-room, where the corn is kept in large mud jars, the tops of which reach nearly to the roof, though their bases are all buried a yard or more in the ground. The principal corn provision of the country consists of wheat (which, however, is rare in some parts), teff, dâgousha, and that sort of millet called in Arabic "doura," and in Abyssinian "mashéla," "léqua," &c., according to its quality. Besides these, they have the corn which bears so many names in different countries. We call it *Indian corn*. In Italy it is called "*gran Turco*," in the dialect of Sennaar, "*eysh reef*" (*Egyptian millet*); in Egypt, "*doura shammy*" (*Syrian millet*); and the Abyssinians of Tigrè call it "*mashéla bah-ry*," or millet from the sea,—their

usual method of distinguishing any foreign importation. This sort of corn, however, is rather scarce in the country, and is mutually exchanged by friends as presents of compliment; just as a hamper of game or a barrel of oysters would be in England. It is seldom ground, being more frequently eaten as a delicacy, roasted on the embers with butter, or boiled like peas. One or two sorts of peas, beans, and vetches are also used in cookery, and sometimes for making bread. The chief corn of the country, however, is "teff" and "dàgousha," if, indeed, we may venture to include these under the head of corn; for they both resemble different sorts of grass, and the seed is not larger than rape or canary seed. Of each of these there are various qualities, esteemed according to their colour—white, red, or black. White "teff" bread is preferred by all natives even to wheat bread. White "dàgousha" is not often grown in the high-land districts, being more commonly met with in the lower countries, like Shiré, &c. All persons who can afford "teff" prefer it for bread, as, except in the "quolla" country, the "dàgousha" is little esteemed or used except for making beer. In fact, it stands in the same position to "teff" in Abyssinia as barley does to wheat in this country. Before the corn can be used for bread it must be ground; which operation is performed by a very simple and primitive apparatus, consisting merely of two stones,—the "mout-han" or grinding-stone, and the "mudid" or grinder (*δ*). The "mout-han" (*A*) is a piece of hard stone, about two feet long by one foot broad, placed on a foundation composed of small stones mixed with clay, of such a height that the upper edge of the stone is about level with the hip of the person at work, its surface sloping gradually downwards, so as to allow the flour as it is ground to fall of itself into the hole (*c*), or into the troughs (*aa*), one of which is on each side of the stone, and whence it is swept by the hand into *c*. The corn to be ground is usually placed in the hollow (*d*), and, as fast as the supply already on the stone is ground, a little more is brought up from this receptacle by one hand,

while the "mudid," or grinder, is kept in motion by the other. The stones are chosen from the mountains, according to their quality, and care is taken that they shall be as nearly as possible of a convenient shape; for in these countries they have no proper tools for working stone; and their way of smoothing a grinding-stone is by tapping it with a pebble,



Grinding-stone.

which is a long and tedious operation, but ultimately produces a tolerably smooth surface. A good hardworking woman-servant will generally grind from six to eight measures—eight to ten quarts—of "teff" in a day, besides doing her other work. There are several ways of making the flour into bread, according to the taste of the eater, the quality of the corn, and the time and circumstances connected with the baking. For example, we have in a former chapter seen the manner in which travellers who have no time to lose make their "gogo" bread. The ordinary bread is called "taita," or "tabita," and is made of the different kinds of corn I have just named, and sometimes, in the country, of peas and vetches. The flour has first to be well dried on the "magogo," then mixed with water, so as to form a sort of paste or dough of about the consistence of weak gruel. This is put into an earthen jar, and left to stand for a day and night to leaven: it is then ready for baking, which is a very simple process. First, to prevent the bread from

adhering to the "magogo," it is rubbed with seed of an oily quality, called "addra," resembling linseed. This is done after the "magogo" has been well heated by the fire underneath; and when the seed becomes so hot as to emit a gas, it is ignited, and with a bit of rag rubbed over the surface of the "magogo." Of the "gruel" or liquid dough a sufficient quantity to make one cake is then poured on the oven, and with the hand is spread over the whole of the circular concave (A), and the cover being put on for two or three minutes, the bread is taken off ready for eating. To facilitate the operation, the "gruel" is ladled out of the "bourma" or jar with a small calabash, which, when filled, contains exactly the quantity requisite for a cake, about eighteen inches in diameter, of the thickness of a twopenny piece, and full of holes, like sponge or a honeycomb. The "teff" is considered by the Abyssinians wholesome and digestible; but so far from being satisfied of this, I am doubtful of its containing much nutritious property; and as for its taste, only fancy yourself chewing a piece of sour sponge, and you will have a good idea of what is considered the best bread in Abyssinia. With regard to the "dàgousha," its flavour is even worse than the "teff," having generally a gritty, sandy taste in the mouth; and its virtues may be judged of from the fact that it undergoes but little change in passing through the digestive process.

Another kind of bread is called "kitcha." Unlike the "tabita," it is crisp and dry, being made merely of flour and water poured over a hollowed iron, called "maglo hatzin," and baked. If it be of wheat, many persons spread a little butter on the iron before pouring out the dough, which gives the bread a taste something like bad piecrust. Made in this way the "kitcha" is perhaps one of the most wholesome and palatable sorts of bread. In size it is nearly of the same diameter as the "tabita," but much thinner; for, if well made, it should be scarcely thicker than a wafer.*

* Among the ancients bread was never cut, but baked in *thin cakes*, which were easily broken. "This ancient form of bread is still retained

Next comes the sort of cake called "hambasha." This, being invariably made of wheat, is perhaps the bread most suitable to an European's taste. To make it a stiff dough, as in Europe, is first prepared, which is generally leavened by the addition of a little "mése" (honey-wine) or beer, for they understand little of the art of kneading. It is then left two days in the sun ; after which it is formed into cakes about nine inches in diameter by one and a half thick, and baked on the "magogo." The top of each cake is tastefully ornamented with devices made with a knife, after the fashion of a pie-crust edge : but its tempting appearance is counterbalanced by the disadvantage of its being heavy.

The last description of bread of which we have to speak is the "hanza," a large cake, more frequently met with in the lower provinces of Tigre. It is made either of millet or teff, and in the following manner : first, two tabita cakes are shaped as above described, a coating of "dillikh" (a paste made with red pepper, something like chatney or mulligatawny) is spread on each, and they are then stuck together by a layer of dough spread between them, and rebaked so as to form only one. This kind of cake and the one last described are often given as presents by the peasantry to their richer neighbours. So much for the bread : now for the meat.

But lest any one should accuse me of unnecessary detail in my descriptions of the native food and drink, or thence form an opinion that such matters occupy much of my mind as well as of my body, I would here say that my observations have been extended for many reasons, partly in the hope that the ladies, in reading them, may find some matter to add to their receipt-books, and partly because it is a purely classical and poetical taste to be curious about eating and drinking. For this we have the best authority. Horace himself must needs inquire of his friend Fundanius, who in the paschal cake of the Jews and the *knäck bröd* of the Swedes. The latter, which is almost as brittle as biscuit, is not cut when used, but broken."

had just returned from a party, what sort of a dinner he had had. "Da (si non græve est)", "tell us," says he ("if it don't bore you"), "quæ prima iratum ventrem placaverit esca"—"what food first appeased your fierce digestive organs." I cannot pretend to present such a list of dainties as did Fundanius. Nasidienus was a better caterer than even Oubi, Prince of Æthiopia. The natives here, though Christian, have generally a decided prejudice against pig; so that no Leucanian boar can be expected; and vegetables are almost unknown. Mæcenas had his choice of Alban or Falernian; but I was obliged to be satisfied with a kind of fermented toast and water, called here beer, or an equally inferior tippie made with honey, something after the manner of mead.

The flesh of bulls and oxen is little relished; that of cows, spayed goats, and sheep being much more esteemed. A fat cow costs in the market from two to three dollars (8s. 4d. to 12s. 6d.). On every festive occasion, as a saint's day, birth, marriage, &c., it is customary for a rich man to collect his friends and neighbours, and kill a cow and one or two sheep. The principal parts of the cow are eaten as "broundo," or raw beef; the remainder is cut into small pieces, and cooked with the favourite sauce of butter and the "dillikh" paste. This is the only sort of made dish, though they vary the principal component parts; but whether fish, flesh, fowl, or vegetables predominate, the same peppery and greasy sauce is always the accompaniment. Various other ingredients are sometimes chopped into it, and they are then stewed together in an earthen dish or pot, in which the *mess* is sent to table. In this preparation there is usually so large a quantity of the red-pepper paste that the whole is of a bright-red hue, and a drop of the sauce is sufficient to produce a blood-red stain on any article of dress.

The slaughtering of animals in Abyssinia is attended with a regular ceremony, as in Mohammedan countries. The animal is thrown down with its head to the east, and the

knife passed across its throat while the words, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,"* are pronounced by the butcher. Almost before the death struggle is over persons are ready to flay the carcase, and pieces of the raw meat are cut off and served up before this operation is completed; in fact, as each part presents itself it is cut off, and eaten while yet warm and quivering. In this state it is considered, and justly so, to be very superior in taste to what it is when cold. Raw meat, if kept a little time, gets tough; whereas if eaten fresh and warm it is far tenderer than the most tender joint that has been hung a week in England. The taste is, perhaps from imagination, rather disagreeable at first, but far otherwise when one gets accustomed to it; and I can readily believe that raw meat would be preferred to cooked meat by a man who from childhood had been accustomed to it.

It would appear that the Abyssinians have a little improved in humanity since Bruce's time. He says, speaking of the manner in which cattle are killed, and of the butcher, "I should beg his pardon, indeed, for calling him an

* The words are, "Bism Ab, ou Weld, ou Menfus Kouddos." Salt, I believe, pretends to correct Bruce's error in these words—but I cannot refer to it at once; if he does, he is wrong; for he himself has made a shocking mess of it—*vide* Valentia's Travels, vol. iii. p. 136, where he says, "*pronouncing at the same time, 'Bis m'Ullah Guebra Menfus Kedus,' a style of invocation that seems to be borrowed from the followers of Mohammed.*" Now "Bis m'Ullah," or rather Bism Illâhi, is the Arabic for "In the name of God," and would on no account or occasion be used by a Christian Abyssinian. I myself have frequently been corrected rather sharply by them when from habit I have accidentally used this expression, or "Al hamdu l'illahi" (thanks be to God), and have never succeeded in proving to them that it mattered not whether God were called by the name of Allah or Izgyheir (as the Tigre people have it). They always insist that to use these words is tantamount to declaring oneself a Mohammedan. "Guebra Menfus Kedus," or (as I should write it) Gabro Menfus Kouddous, is the name of an Abyssinian saint of great repute, and means "The Slave of the Holy Ghost;" so that Mr. Salt's invocation, if translated from the two languages which compose it, would be in English, "In the name of God, the Slave of the Holy Ghost."

assassin, as he is not so merciful as to aim at the life, but, on the contrary, to keep the beast alive till he be totally eaten up. Having satisfied the Mosaical law, according to his conception, by pouring these six or seven drops upon the ground, two or more of them fall to work : on the back of the beast, and on each side of the spine, they cut skin-deep ; then putting their fingers between the flesh and the skin, they begin to strip the hide of the animal half way down its ribs, and so on to the buttock, cutting the skin wherever it hinders them commodiously to strip the poor animal bare. All the flesh on the buttocks is then cut off, and in solid, square pieces, without bones, or much effusion of blood ; and the prodigious noise the animal makes is a signal for the company to sit down to table." And again, after describing the feast, he continues : " All this time the unfortunate victim at the door is bleeding indeed, but bleeding little. As long as they can cut off the flesh from his bones ; they do not meddle with the thighs or the parts where the great arteries are. At last they fall upon the thighs likewise ; and soon after, the animal, bleeding to death, becomes so tough that the cannibals, who have the rest of it to eat, find it very hard work to separate the flesh from the bones with their teeth like dogs." I must say I never saw any such cruelty practised in my time.

I have been often asked about "*the steak cut from the live cow*," and have only to say, once for all, *I firmly believe that Bruce saw what he has stated.* While I was in Abyssinia, a soldier, in conversation with me and several others, volunteered a story quite similar to Bruce's, both as regards the manner of the operation and the reasons why it was performed. On inquiry, he said that such a practice was not uncommon among the Gallas, and even occasionally occurred among themselves when, as in the case Bruce relates, a cow had been stolen or taken in foray. The men who drive her, being hungry, have no alternative but to go on fasting, kill the cow, or act as described. The first they will not do ; the second would imply the necessity of carry-

ing home the residue of the meat, or leaving it to the jackals,—neither of which would suit their inclinations ; so the third is adopted.

Among great men there is a fashion in the choice of the part of the animal they prefer for “broundo.” Dejatch Oubi formerly touched nothing but the “tannash,” or rump ; but he has changed his taste, and now eats only the “ingadyé,” which is the inside of the thigh. Dejatch Ma-at-semto prefers the “chickunna,” which is the piece on the outside, from the thigh-bone downwards. Fitaurari Garrinchael will eat only the “shint,” or strips down each side of the back-bone. The “tallak” is eaten by more ordinary persons, and is taken from the hip-bone downwards, next the “chickunna,” which however is nearer the belly.

When a cow is killed in a chieftain’s establishment, there is not a part of it, from the horns to the hoofs, that does not belong, by right, to some member of his household. For instance, the gunners on guard (“zevaynia”) have the “frimbia,” or strip down the chest. The royal washerman has the “tooncha,” or second joint of one arm ; while the “gasha-jagry,” or shield-bearer, has the similar joint of the other. The “quähmy,” or wood-carriers, have the privilege of killing and skinning the animals : their perquisite consists in the right of cutting a small piece off each division of the meat ; two-thirds of the thus collected morsels belong to them, and the remaining third to the beaters of the “negarit,” or big drums. The neck, paunch, and liver, belong to the grass-cutters ; the thigh-bones, with the meat remaining on them, to the “gomibaynia,” or women who carry the “gombos,” or jars, of mead for their master’s use when on a journey. The porters, who carry the chief’s provisions on like occasions, take the “talma,” or fat membrane of the belly, and a bone with a little bit of meat from the shoulder. The tongue and cheeks are preserved for great men. My friend Dejatch Shayto is very fond of them raw : they are brought to him while the animal is expiring. The “ambiltania,” or fifers, have, like

the drummers and "quàhmy," a small piece off each portion of the meat. The "azmàry," or buffoon, claims the gristle from the "frimbia." The scribe, who writes the accounts of the food, has for his allowance a small piece of meat from the shoulder, near the "shint." The cooks have the "shimfilla," a part near the tripe. The ribs are eaten "tibsy," or broiled, on the embers of a wood-fire. The hump is another privilege of great men only; and the most renowned warrior among them has the first cut at it. They frequently keep up a friendly controversy for a long time before any one can be persuaded to put a knife into it, each politely offering to his neighbour the post of honour. It sometimes becomes a matter of serious dispute, and is suggestive of that which was occasioned by the fruit of pure Hesperian gold that was cast upon the board in the "fair Peleian banquet-hall;" for as the apple was engraved on its gleaming rind "For the most fair," so the hump bears on its flabby red surface "For the most renowned." An instance of this once occurred in the palace of the former Ras Gouxa, Ali's father. The Amhàra warriors were undecided as to the man who should first attack this bone of contention, when the late Nebreet Welda Selassy settled the point by drawing his sword and helping himself: this he did, no doubt; as, being the only Tigrèan present, he was anxious to take the honour to himself from a feeling of "patriotism. But the Amhàra chieftains did not bear the affront quietly: a quarrel was immediately fixed on the Tigrè champion by the warriors of the rival nation, two of whom more especially took it up, and he was challenged to prove the superiority he had arrogated to himself, by fighting them. This he did in a way which left them no room for complaining: he fought them both on horseback, and, what's more, killed them both. For this, however, he had to fly the country; as, although he had vanquished his adversaries in fair fight, their friends and relatives were for taking up the cause, and, national jealousy being awakened, his life would doubtless have been sacrificed had he fallen into their hands.

The cow, and different varieties of the gazelle and antelope tribe, are the only animals which are eaten raw, except in certain districts of Abyssinia; as, for instance, Simyen, where the flesh of the spayed goat ("mouquet") is also considered eligible for "broudo." The mutton, at Adoua especially, is of very inferior quality, being as tough as leather, of about as fine grain as a coarse worsted stocking; and if you could find the minutest particle of fat on it, even with the aid of a microscope, don't eat it up at once, but keep half of it till to-morrow, lest you should never again have such good luck. Mutton is either chopped up and stewed with the peppery sauce I have before described, or broiled on the embers, but never eaten raw.

The "mantay hâmot," or "chogera," is a dish prepared of the tripe and liver cut into small pieces. The contents of the gall-bladder are then squeezed over it, as also a part of the half-digested green matter found in the intestines of the animal. This dish, after having been duly seasoned with pepper, salt, &c., and a little warmed, till it acquires the natural heat of the animal, is eaten with the greatest gusto, not only by the poor, but even by the greatest chiefs in the country. This preparation is also much esteemed all over Nubia, Sennaar, and Kordofan, only with a trifling variation in these countries, where they dispense with the "green matter" and warming, but add raw onions chopped, and chilis instead of capsicums. My description will, no doubt, have already sufficed to disgust many of my readers, especially those of the fair sex; so that I dare not presume to request them to try a dish of this same chogera. Still it is an eatable dish; nay, verily, a palatable dish; and it hath, moreover, a quality for inducing men to partake freely of the *cup* which always accompanies it.

From the foregoing descriptions of the "broudo" and "chogera" of the Abyssinians, one is apt to run away with the impression that these people are by no means delicate in their choice of food, while, in truth, no nation is more scrupulously so, after its own fashion. Besides refusing all animals which have teeth in their upper jaw—as the hare;

and all such as have not cloven feet—as the camel, whose foot is only cloven above ; and many others, from religious prejudice, of which I shall say more hereafter ; they have also various points of delicacy which differ in the several parts of the country. For instance, in some places a sick cow would be killed and eaten, for fear of its dying and the flesh becoming useless ; while in other provinces no one would think of tasting it. In many parts of Tigre veal is reckoned disgusting unless pretty large, while in Hamasayn the meat of calves two or three days old is considered a delicacy. I have even heard of a calf which had been dropped at six months and died, being eaten ; and one man, who had tasted of it, assured me that its flesh was very white, tender, and good. An animal killed by a lion or leopard is by most persons considered eatable, those beasts being reckoned Christian ; while, on the contrary, no one would touch the meat of an animal which had fallen a prey to the hyæna, that disgusting scavenger being considered as of the Mussulman religion. The Moslems are very lax in these points, some of them eating the flesh of the wild-boar, or the unslaughtered (and, consequently, forbidden) leavings of their brother hyæna.

My kind readers, bear with me yet. When you have been for years in a strange land, where you scarcely ever see a white face, and never perhaps meet a single fellow-countryman, with whom to hold sweet converse in your mother-tongue, will not the thoughts of home—of those you have left behind, fond scenes, friends, and relatives—sometimes present themselves ? Who can doubt it ? Surely, then, I may be excused for entertaining fond wishes and recollections of the past. Often, very often, in those dreary solitudes, have I wished for oysters and porter. After much experimenting, I discovered that a raw sheep's liver, if cut up in small pieces and nicely arranged in a spoon, and well peppered and vinegared, with a little salt, was by no means a bad substitute for an oyster ; and while eating this preparation I have sometimes shut my eyes, and almost cheated myself into the belief that I was again in England.

Fowls are the only animal food which remains to be described. Alas, poor fowls!—the biggest of them look as if but just hatched, and have no more taste than an old rag, except that imparted by the “universal sauce.” The red pepper, as must already have been seen, is a staple commodity in these countries. The large-podded capsicum is grown in fields all over the most fertile parts of the country, especially near brooks, or other places where it can be well watered, either by irrigation or the natural moisture of the soil. The chili is only grown in Walkayt and one or two of the other low provinces of Tigrè; but large quantities of it are produced throughout Sennaar, Nubia, &c. The capsicum, on account of its flavour, is justly preferred by the Abyssinians to its sharp, fiery, rough little cousin. By many persons it is eaten raw with bread, but more commonly it is prepared for cookery or other uses in one of the following modes. First, “doukous” is merely the pod dried, pounded, and mixed with salt and black pepper. This is used precisely as we use pepper in this country, and is generally carried about on a journey in the crooked spiral horn of the “agazin,” a large sort of antelope. The horn is neatly cleaned and polished, then bunged up at the butt, capped with red leather, and furnished with slings of the same material, which serve for carrying or suspending it. The pepper is got out by a small hole, perforated at the point of the horn, which is kept closed by a plug. Secondly, the “owazay” is a paste made of fresh capsicums, rubbed down on the grinding-stone, with salt and pepper. The third preparation, called “dillikh,” is the most important of all: it is also a paste, but is made of either dry or fresh pods, cooked on a fire, with an equal quantity of onions. After they are well done, black pepper, salt, fresh ginger, and a great variety of odoriferous herbs and other condiments are added, according to the taste of the maker; and the whole is worked down together on a “mout-han” kept on purpose, till it becomes of a soft, paste-like consistency, not unlike the Chatney paste of India. The two latter preparations are used for mixing in stews

and other dishes, while all three are eaten with "broundo," or the "tibsy," as we use mustard or salt. Although vegetables, such as carrots, parsnips, &c., exist in a wild state in many parts of Abyssinia, the natives can be scarcely said to use them; for they only eat, and this but for two or three months in the year, a herb called "hamly," or "goommen," the taste of which slightly resembles spinach.* This and lentils, cooked in their horrible oil, which from its drying properties is more like varnish, and which they call "kivvy nyhoke," are the favourite dishes during some of the fasts.

Milk is very scarce in the town of Adoua. I paid a dollar a month for the milk of a cow, which rarely yielded me more than between half a pint and a pint daily. For more than a year I gave up meat, and my food consisted altogether of clotted milk (called here "rogo") with bread, and flavoured with honey or pepper by way of change. A jar, which when new is smoked, is kept on purpose for clotting the milk, to which, on being first put into it, a little sour milk is added to assist in turning it. When clotted it is poured out for use; but the jar is never washed, the remains of the preceding day's "rogo" being sufficient to turn the evening's fresh milk into a clot, like a jelly, before morning. The natives also make a bad imitation of cheese, which they call "ajouvo." This and the "rogo" they always eat with their favourite pepper "dillikh," kneading their "teff" bread cakes into it till they make a stiff paste, which they roll up into long pellets, and poke into their own or their neighbour's mouth. Sometimes, however, these preparations of milk are served up at dinner with the other dishes, and, taken in mouthfuls alternately with the fiery stew, act most agreeably as a cooler to it.

* Not quite three centuries ago our own kitchen-gardens were little better supplied. "It was not," says Hume, "till the end of Henry the Eighth's reign that any salads, carrots, turnips, or other edible roots were produced in England; the little of these vegetables that was used was imported from Holland and Flanders—Queen Catherine, when she wanted a salad, was obliged to despatch a messenger thither on purpose."

Butter is sold either fresh, to be used as pomatum for the hair, or prepared for keeping and kitchen use. This is done by simply boiling the fresh butter in a large vessel till the scum rises. A person is kept watching to skim this off, as fast as it appears on the surface, until the butter remains quite clear, like oil, when it is cooled and left for use, and always retains its liquid state. This mode of clarifying butter is adopted throughout Sennaar, Kordofan, &c., and even in Egypt, and is very useful, as the butter thus prepared may be kept for any length of time, and its flavour is but slightly inferior to fresh butter.

Abyssinia may indeed boast of her honey, which she produces not only in great quantities, but also of the finest quality. There is both wild and domestic honey: the latter, however, is far superior to the former, which (excepting the one or two virgin combs found in each nest) is of a dull, dirty, brown colour, and has not the same strength of sweetness or flavour as the domestic honey. The wild bees are usually found in hollow trees in the low ravines, more especially in those called the "dima," whose nature it is to become hollow when they attain a certain growth. A little brown-looking bird, with a small yellow spot on each wing, called the bee-finder, is a sure guide to persons who are in search of wild honey; for if they attend to his merry chirp as he flutters from tree to tree, he will soon conduct them to the sweet booty they are seeking. The wild honey is generally used for making "mése" or "tedge." The domestic honey is sometimes kept for a year or two before it is exposed for sale, and at the expiration of that time is often found to have settled down in the jar, and become a solid mass. Once or twice I have received honey as a present, or have bought it in the market, in such a state of solidity that I had great difficulty in cutting it with a knife; nor could I fairly get at it without breaking the jar, when it came out a solid lump, of a pale straw-colour, approaching to white. More frequently, however, it is found in a semi-liquid state, of a pale lemon-colour, containing white crystallized lumps, so exceedingly sweet, that I had considerable

difficulty in eating a bit the size of a walnut ; and I remember a person who became ill on taking a somewhat larger quantity.

For drink, the Abyssinians have their "tedge," or "mése" (as the Tigrè people call it), and their different sorts of beer. The general name of this latter beverage is in the Tigrè language "soua," and in the Amhàric "talla." The "mése" is a kind of mead : its name has an affinity to the German "meth ;" whence our mead is derived. It is thus prepared :—One part of honey is mixed with five or six parts of water, according to the strength required. This honey-water is put into a narrow-mouthed jar with a little "tsaddoo" (a sort of bitter bark), or "géso" (a bitter herb), which, in this compound, are analogous to hops in beer. It is then left in the sun till fit for drinking, which depends much on the temperature of the weather. The criterion of its being ready is that the liquor has fermented to such a degree as to have nearly lost its original sweetness. I have heard this beverage praised by some Europeans ; but as made by the natives it was always too bitter for my taste : and in this respect it seems I am not singular, for Bruce complains that it always gave him a headache. It not unfrequently has the effect of an aperient on persons unaccustomed to it. The Abyssinians, however, get through an almost incredible quantity. I should be afraid to mention the number of horns that I have heard of a man's drinking at one sitting.

The "soua," or beer, is made as follows :—Dàgousha flour is made into a dough with water, and left to ferment for two or three weeks, during which time they fumigate it with the smoke of various kinds of wood, such as in the Tigrè language are called "tarsos," "agam," "owleh," "mabté," "tchandak," &c. After this the dough is divided into cakes and baked on a flat iron, and the day following a mixture of barley-flour and water is made, which, together with the cakes, is put into a large jar of water ; to this is added at the same time a small quantity of the bitter "géso." After being allowed to remain quiet for a few

hours the beer is fit for drinking. There are different qualities of beer, each bearing a different name, according to its age, strength, &c. One very strong kind is called "dôuqua." Beer, which from having been kept for some days becomes clear, is named "serrouy."

When the master of an Abyssinian house takes his meals, all his servants stand round the doorway and look on; which custom, though it has at first a disagreeable effect to a stranger, is in reality a mark of respect to their superior, showing that they are in attendance on him, and not merely eating his bread and idling their time away. The master's feeding-time, in fact, is a sort of muster for the servants. The dinner-tables in great houses are usually of wood, roughly made, but frequently also of wicker-work neatly put together. When a party is expected fresh grass is spread on the floor, and the tables are ranged of various sorts and sizes—the highest nearest the master's end of the room—some wooden, some wicker, some broad, others narrow, it being only in a few fashionable establishments that two or three of corresponding size can be found. All of course are very low, being made of the height most convenient for a person seated on the ground; for chairs are unknown in the country. The table being spread, the bread is brought in by servants in large baskets carried on their heads. If the bread be all made in the house, the cakes of inferior quality are ranged at the top of each basket, while the better sort are underneath, or the different kinds are brought in in different baskets. In either case the piles are so arranged on the tables that the best sort appears at the top of each pile. It often happens, when there is likely to be a great consumption, that additional bread is borrowed of the neighbours or servants of the house. Each basket of the subsidy is then carefully examined by the "azzadge," or house steward, and the contents disposed of as above; namely, the "dàgousha" and barley bread is laid at the bottom; the coarse kind of "teff" comes next; and at the top of all, the finest white bread. Before each person is placed a pile of from eight to ten of these cakes for a small

party ; but at such an establishment as Oubi's sometimes each guest would have thirty or more cakes before him. This is so arranged because the nobler guests are first seated and eat of the finest bread ; then those of humbler rank take their places and partake of the second class of bread ; and so on in succession till the coarsest is eaten by the servants and poor friends. The cakes supply the place of napkins, as the fingers of the guests are frequently wiped on them after being dipped in the dish or rendered bloody by the raw meat. This, however, does not in the least affect the appetites of those who, coming after, have to eat them. The company being assembled, the most distinguished personages are requested to be seated, and are placed according to their rank by the "Shelika zifàn beyt" or "Agafàri Adderash," two dignitaries of whose duties, &c., we will more fully speak in the proper place. A good deal of politeness sometimes ensues as to precedence, but, all being at last settled down in their places, the "soub-hè" or cooked dishes are brought in by the cook women, each of whom receives a piece of bread dipped in the dish she has carried. These are placed on the table according to their quality, the best nearest the top ; and the "asalafy," or waiters,* take a piece of bread from before each person, and, sopping it in the sauce, return it to him. They also serve the guests with meat from the dishes, cutting, or with their fingers† tearing it into pieces of a convenient size ; and in doing this

* The office of "asalafy" in Abyssinia would seem to correspond nearly with that of the "scissor," "carptor," or "diribitor" of the ancients.

† I imagine there can be no need for me to say that forks are not used in Abyssinia any more than they are in other eastern countries, except among a few of the Turks, who have very lately borrowed their use from the Franks.

Many of my friends have asked me if I had ever eaten with my fingers, and when I replied that I had done so for more than six years, and that even when in Egypt I continued to do so "*par préférence*" in my own lodgings, and up to the day I got on board the steamer which was to convey me homeward, they appeared astonished, nay, even horrified. Some of my readers may be ignorant of the fact that within the last two centuries forks were rare in England.

they frequently show great favouritism, giving the kidneys and tit-bits to one, and the gristle and bones to another. They are very attentive, never allowing any one to be a moment unsupplied. The guests take their bread and sauce and mix them together into a sort of paste, of which they make balls, long and rounded like small black puddings: these they consider it polite to poke into the mouths of their neighbours; so that, if you happen to be a distinguished character, or a stranger to whom they wish to pay attention, which often was my case, you are in a very disagreeable position; for your two neighbours, one on each side, cram into your mouth these large and peppery proofs of their esteem so quickly one after the other, that, long before you can chew and swallow the one, you are obliged to make room for the next. They generally succeed in half choking you; and if you feel you are losing the skin of your mouth, lips, and throat from the fiery effects of the pepper, you dare not ask for water, as that would be considered rude; and the mead is seldom served till the dinner is over. While these dishes, which are generally made of mutton, are on the table, the cow is killed and flayed outside; and immediately on their removal the "broundo" is brought in, each servant carrying a yet quivering lump in his hands. The choicest pieces are carried to the highest tables, where are seated the master of the feast and the most distinguished guests. There is usually a piece of meat to every five or six persons, among whom arises some show of ceremony as to which of them shall first help himself; this being at length decided, the person chosen takes hold of the meat with his left hand, and with his sword or knife cuts a strip a foot or fifteen inches long from the part which appears the nicest and tenderest. The others then help themselves in like manner.

If I should fail in describing properly the scene which now follows, I must request the aid of the reader's imagination. Let him picture to himself thirty or forty Abyssinians, stripped to their waists, squatting round the low tables, each with his sword or knife or "shotel" in his hand, some eating, some helping themselves, and some waiting their

turn, but all bearing in their features the expression of that fierce gluttony which one attributes more to the lion or leopard than to the race of Adam. The imagination may be much assisted by the idea of the lumps of raw pink and



An Abyssinian feeding.

blue flesh they are gloating over. But I have yet to describe how they eat the strip of meat which I have just made one of the party cut off. A quantity of "dillikh" or "aou-a-zé" being laid on his bread, he dips one end of the meat into it, and then, seizing it between his teeth, while he holds the other end in his left hand, he cuts a bit off close to his lips by an upward stroke of his sword, only just avoiding the tip of his nose, and so on till he has finished the whole strip.

The "tibsy," or broiled meat, is brought in nearly at the same time with the "broundo." It consists of the rib-bones,

with the meat cut in strips, and hanging like a tassel from one end. The servant holds the bone in his hand, and each of the guests cuts off a strip, and eats it with the pepper as he does the "broundo."

I must not omit to mention one good custom which the Abyssinians have in common with the Mohammedams—that of washing hands before and after eating and drinking. The "quontach" is a servant appointed to bring water before and after meals to each guest, usually in a horn, but sometimes, in new-fashioned great houses, in a brass ewer. While the people are yet eating, this servant comes round to every one with a wicker dish-cover or basket, and begs a trifle in the name of the Virgin Mary, or of the Saviour, whereupon each person gives him a portion of what he is eating. This is the custom on family party days only, when not many persons are assembled; but at grand entertainments this is not usual. On these occasions the boys about the house get under the tables like so many dogs, lying down in all the filth there accumulated; and by alternately pinching and caressing the feet and legs of the visitors induce them to throw down morsels; but although this is almost always done, it can scarcely be said to be so much allowed as winked at. These little imps are often very handy, as, when one is half choked by the peppery balls, the easiest way to get rid of them is to let them drop unobserved. The boys will not fail to pick them up and devour them greedily, even should they have been half chewed by you already. I have seen bones gnawed and regnawed by a dozen mouths, before the poor patient dog outside was allowed to have his turn.

The Abyssinians have pleasing manners in receiving anything offered to them, taking it in both hands, and bowing their heads at the same time. After the eating is over, a jar of mead or beer is brought in by one or more of the "logouàmy," or grass-cutters, and placed on a small stool kept for the purpose. The jar is sometimes so large that one man cannot possibly carry it. Its mouth is covered with a piece of rag drawn tight over it as a strainer, to pre-

vent the bits of wax, bark, and other extraneous matter from falling into the drinking vessels when the mead is poured out. These vessels are the "wancha," or horns (commonly used in the country, but more often for beer than for mead), common tumblers, and a sort of bottle from Venice called "brillé." The office of pouring out the mead devolves on one of the "logouàmy" who brings in the jar. He supports it under his arm, raising and lowering it to fill the "wancha," which are held by another servant, called the "fellàky," who keeps tapping or scratching the rag with his finger, to facilitate the free flow of the liquor. Under the mouth of the jar is a bowl to catch the droppings, which are the perquisite of the "fellàky." It is easy for this functionary to appropriate to himself one glass out of every five or six, if he knows how to arrange matters with the "logouàmy," who holds the jar so that he may keep pouring on a little after each vessel is filled. Besides this, he has the right of emptying into his reservoir about one inch of the liquor from every "wancha" filled (which is a good deal, as they are very broad at the mouth and narrow downwards), and from every "brillé" or bottle two inches. The first horn poured out is drunk by the "logouàmy" who holds the jar, and the second by the "tedge melkénia," who has the superintendence of the brewery. The "fellàky" then arranges the horns on the ground near him as fast as they are filled, and the "asafy," or waiter, taking them up, drinks one himself, then presents one to the master of the house, and afterwards hands them round to the company. Before offering a glass to any one the waiter pours a little of the contents into his left hand and drinks it off; this, with all the former tasting by the brewer, grass-cutter, waiter, &c., is to show that the mead is not poisoned. Notwithstanding, however, all these precautions, Dejatch Oubi never drinks without first pouring a little of the liquor on the ground, carefully turning the vessel round at the same time, so as to remove any poison that might be concealed on its edges. He seldom drinks more than a quarter of his glass, and then returns it. Other persons drink about two-thirds, the

remainder being the perquisite of the waiter, who, as soon as the glass is returned to him, drinks off the contents. He would not, however, presume to put his master's cup to his lips, but raising it above his head pours the contents into his mouth from a distance. This feat is rather difficult to perform, for if he has not the knack of letting the mead flow straight down his throat, without attempting to swallow, he must choke; and if he has not the dexterity to give a right direction to the stream, it will probably be spilt down his neck. If it be a "wancha" it is still more difficult to manage, on account of the breadth of its mouth. Persons anxious to show favour to any particular servant will pour mead into his two hands, which he holds like a trough to his mouth, whence he imbibes it; but should the master be a martinet, like Oubi, for example, the servant would not venture to exhibit any such feats before him, but would pour the liquor into some other vessel before drinking it. It may readily be imagined that at a large party all these tops and bottoms of glasses would form together a considerable quantity, and that the "asalafy" would have as much as he could do to carry himself, to say nothing of the glasses, were he to drink all that falls to his share: so he either distributes it to his fellow-servants, or collects it in a bowl for a great tippie with his friends in the evening.

At a feast Oubi seldom speaks, making known his wishes to his "asalafies" by signs. For example, many of his principal officers (even his own sons) remain standing against the wall; custom and fear, more than a sense of respect for their master, forbidding them to be seated in his presence. Oubi then, by a sign with his finger, directs the "asalafy" to give bread to such a one, mead to another, &c.

Since the battle of Devra Tabor his son Lemma has been allowed to sit, being the eldest as well as the favourite son; but Shétou, Guonguoul, and Carsai, all remain standing. Poor Shétou, I believe, feels this preference of Lemma severely; for he doubtless considers himself a superior man in every respect to his puny elder brother. When he presents himself at his father's table, which he does as seldom as

possible, he has his food given to him in a small dish-cover, held by a little boy of his father's suite, for the sake of the leavings. Neither does he presume to enter his father's presence without first notifying his approach, and asking permission. Should he do otherwise, he would probably be told, in the most unceremonious way, to wait outside, or perhaps be even rudely pushed back. Shétou, too, has a rather slang way of dressing, which greatly offends his father. Sometimes he comes in with one leg of his trousers drawn up in the proper manner above his calf, and the other dangling down about his ankle. On such an occasion it would not be at all extraordinary should Oubi, after looking at him fixedly, and in his usual quiet, smiling manner, begin in the presence of all assembled, "Well done, son of a Mohammedan mother! Pretty way of wearing your breeches, isn't it? Some new fashion of your own, eh!" And turning to the "agafari," "Turn him out; turn him out!" The poor lad is put out in the most neck-and-crop manner, and returning to his tent he broods over this treatment, and vows vengeance on his brother Lemna, who, from being the favourite, is partly the cause of it.

As servants cost but little in these countries, either for wages or keep, great men maintain a large establishment. A list of the principal domestics may here be given. First are the two "belladt'inkatas," the superior of whom has the duty assigned to him of assisting his master with his advice on every occasion; to try all minor causes that may be brought to him for judgment; and, in fact, to act as his counsellor and *aide-de-camp*. The second fills the post of house-steward, arranging all matters regarding the pay of the servants and other household expenses. These two are the principal men of every chief's suite, and unless highly distinguished visitors are present they sit at his right hand on feast-days. With these may be classed the "apha negous." He sits with them on important trials; and, hearing all that passes, reports it to his master, who, after having considered the case, sends him back to the place of judgment with his sentence. Next in order is the "shelika zifân beyt," who is

a sort of master of the ceremonies. On days of reception his post is near the "zifân" or throne of his master, if we may apply so dignified a term to the couch on which all chiefs, even of the highest rank, recline. He passes the word for the admission of strangers to the "agafâri adderash," or audience-room doorkeeper, who, with his mate, the "tannash agafâri," or small doorkeeper, assists him in arranging the people as they enter, which he does with his long wand of office, or in turning them out again, at a sign from his master. The "helfinia askalcai" is a sort of watchman, who remains always at the door, and gives notice of arrivals, &c. The "helfinia shelika" stands constantly near his master, passes his orders to the other servants of the interior, and informs him if they are properly executed. "Ikkabeyt" is he who has in charge all the moveables belonging to his master. He has under his command a considerable body of men, who are his "chiffra" or followers. When the chief changes his residence they are employed as porters in removing his goods; and in war-time they act as soldiers. It is from this body that Oubi generally selects a man as a safeguard to accompany travellers on their journey through his dominions, and to procure them necessary provisions. Also in the case of natives, who may have some business in which the prince's message should be delivered by one of his own servants, he calls either the "ikkabeyt" or "sheff-zagry," and orders him to furnish from his "chiffra" a man to accompany such a person on such a business. The "ikkabeyt," thereupon, selects either a favourite of his own or one whom he wishes to get new-clothed, as the messenger always expects to be clothed, if not armed, as well as to receive a present from the person with whom he is sent, more especially if his business is to convey a favourable answer in the cause in which he is interested. In ancient times it was the custom for the princes and chiefs of Abyssinia to be preceded on all occasions by a body of men called the "sheff-zagry," who carried large two-edged swords, mounted in silver, and placed in red cloth bags. This custom is now nearly extinct. Dejatch Oubi retains a body

of men who still bear the name, though they are become the principal "chiffra" of lancers. Their commander is called "shelika sheff-zagry."

These may be considered as the principal officers about the court of a great man, who have the right of ingress and egress to his presence without being announced. After these come the inferior domestic servants. The "azzadge" is a sort of male housekeeper, and has the charge and distribution of all the provision, corn, &c. He and the "tedge melkénia," or butler, and the "siggar shelika," who is over the meat department, are under the direction of the second "belladt'inkata," as also a "toquotatàry" or accountant, who reports all the incomings and outgoings of the establishment, and a scribe, who writes them. The "shelika siggar" is likewise chief of the "quàmry" or wood-carriers, who are also employed as court butchers. The "mitchénia," or grooms, have the "logouàmry," or grass-cutters, under their orders. The "askoratch" is the man who holds the raw beef or broiled bones for the guests to help themselves. He holds the former in both hands, and all that remains in his grasp is his perquisite. The "carra asalàfy" is the knife-cleaner: he presents a knife to each person to eat his "broundo;" and the knives are returned to him with a bit of meat stuck on the point. Besides these there are the "wisht ashkeroitch," who are a lot of little boys about every house. One of these is the "makhadda tabàky," or cushion-keeper. Others take it by turns to keep off the flies during meals, or at any time when they are troublesome; and they are sometimes made to lie by the hour across their master's couch, for him to lean upon, instead of a cushion, or to sit on the floor and hold his feet.

The pay of the servants is arranged in various ways, according to their situation and circumstances. A common servant-man usually receives about ten pieces of cloth and four or five "madigas" of corn a-year; altogether equivalent to about eight dollars, or 1*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* The corn, however, varies in price, from one and a half to six "madigas" for a dollar, and the cotton cloths at from one to three for the

like sum. If, however, the man has a servant-boy—for carrying his shield, &c.—or is married, or has a mule or horse, or all of these, his pay and allowances are increased accordingly. Should their master be a “shoum,” or petty chief, he generally finds means to enrich his servants at the expense of the peasantry, by sending one here to collect taxes, another there to try some petty cause, others as “balderàbbas,” or introducers, to private persons who may have need of them for their affairs, &c. In such cases he diminishes their pay, and they contrive to get very good pickings in the way of presents, bribes, &c., from those persons with whom they may have to do.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE, DRESS, &c.

THE Abyssinians are of middle stature, averaging I should think about 5 feet 7 inches, rather more than less. I have seldom seen natives above 6 feet, and only one or two who reached 6 feet 2 inches. In colour some of them are perfectly black; but the majority are brown, or a very light copper or nut colour. This variety of complexion, observable in both sexes, is, I should think, attributable to the mixture of races of which the nation is composed.* Although in some districts certain colours appear to predominate slightly over others, yet I have never seen any district, and seldom even any family, in which you could trace uniformity of colour. In features perhaps you might do so. But as a man may have around him a family the produce of five or six different wives; and, as many of them naturally take after their respective mothers, you often see a brother almost white with a soot-black sister, or *vice versa*, as in the case of one of my servants, who was as black as a coal, short and thick set, and had a sister who was taller than himself, and nearly as fair as an Egyptian. Both men and women are

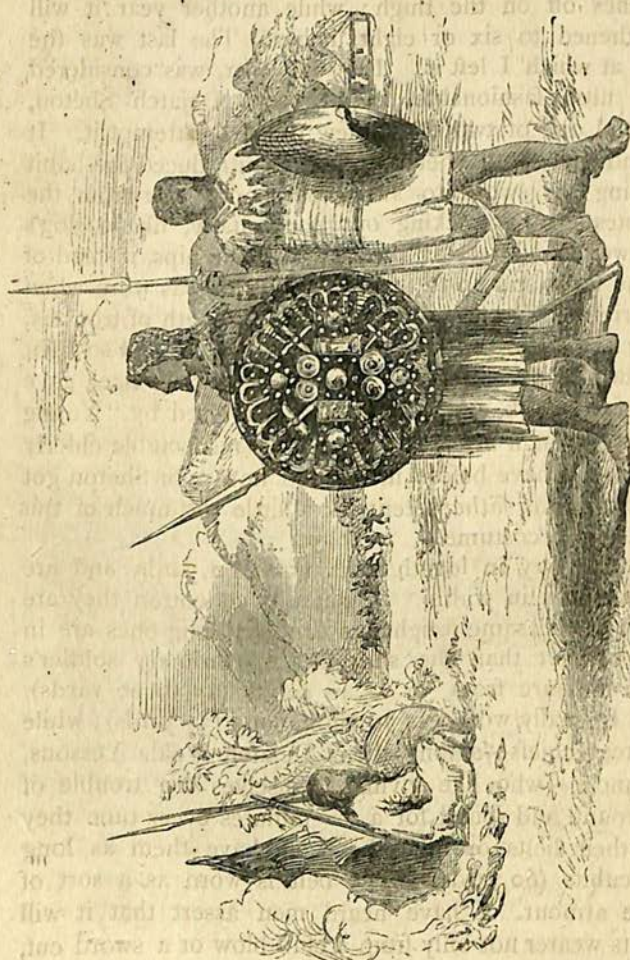
* The word "Hâbâsh" (the native name for Abyssinian) means, I believe, a "mixture" in the Giz language. A mixture of various qualities of corn goes by that name in some of the provinces of Tigrè. It is supposed by some that a great number of Jews followed the Queen of Sheba, on her return from her visit to Solomon, and that a large colony of fugitives also took refuge in Abyssinia about the time of the destruction of the temple and the captivity. Subsequently the Greeks sent missionaries, and they were doubtless accompanied by adventurers; and the Portuguese sent a number of troops, some of whom remained in the country for many years.

remarkably well formed, and in general handsome—often strikingly so. Some few of the men are a little ill-shaped about the lower limbs and feet; but as this is rare, and, even where it does occur, scarcely observable in comparison with a genuine nigger's, I attribute it to overwork and going bare-foot when young. The women of the higher classes have remarkably pretty feet and shapes, owing to the absence of the horrible confining fashions: they however soon fall off, chiefly I imagine from climate, though partly perhaps from want of the artificial supports which are usual in European countries. But this to a traveller matters little, as in passing through the country he seldom sees anything but the beautiful forms of young girls, who go half-naked; while married women, always wearing long loose shirts, and quarries over them, effectually conceal their figures, whether they be good or bad. Occasionally, however, he sees servants and working women of the lower classes stripped to the waist when grinding corn, or otherwise laboriously occupied. From sights like these he will turn away his head, not from modesty, but from sheer disgust; for from habit, after a few days, one forgets altogether to remark that the natives are rather lightly clad.

For dress, the male Abyssinians wear a pair of tight cotton inexpressibles, a large belt, and a "quarry" or mantle, of the same material. As I have before remarked, the dress of the soldiers and peasantry is nearly alike; that of the former being only of a rather more stylish cut. Much in the same way as in England, and everywhere in Europe, the "citadini" are distinguishable from the "contadini" by the cut of their cloth. Now as this inferiority of the countryman in the style of his clothes, whether in Abyssinia or elsewhere, depends not so much on his taste as on the ignorance of his tailor, I shall in my description allude to the costume of those who lead the fashion—not of those who make ineffectual attempts at following it. If a stranger were to attempt to describe the dress of an Englishman, he ought surely to choose his model at a good tailor's.

The trousers are of a soft-textured but rather coarse

cotton stuff, made in the country, and are of two sorts; one called, "càliss," the other "coumta." The former reaches half-way down the calf of the leg, the latter to about three



Abyssinian Warriors (my own Silver-mounted Shield).

or four inches above the knee. Both, if the wearer be a dandy, are made skin-tight. I might enter into a long account of the peculiar fashions to which these trousers are

subject, parts being doubled, parts single. One year it may be the fashion to have the seam at the side of the "càlliss," below the knee, of about two inches long only, before it branches off on the thigh; while another year it will be lengthened to six or eight inches. The last was the measure at which I left it. This, however, was considered so very ultra fashionable, that, except Dejatch Shétou, myself, and one or two others, few dared to attempt it. It was I and my friend Shétou who first introduced the habit of allowing the sword to swing perpendicularly from the side, instead of its sticking out horizontally, like a dog's tail; as well as of wearing the belt over the hips, instead of round the waist and up to the armpits, as it was worn when I first arrived. These, with the increased length of trousers, reaching as we wore them to nearly the ankle, and so tight below that it took an hour to draw them over the heel, gave a very "fast" look, and were much patronised by "Young Abyssinia," though invariably decried by respectable elderly gentlemen. I have before mentioned how poor Shétou got turned out of his father's tent for a little too much of this exaggeration in costume.

The belts vary in length from 15 to 60 yards, and are about one yard in width. In quantity of cotton they are nearly all of the same weight, as the very long ones are in proportion finer than the shorter. An ordinary soldier's belt will measure from 30 to 40 cubits (15 to 20 yards). The one I usually wore was 70 cubits long (35 yards); while a few great chiefs—among them Dejatch Welda Yessous, Oubi's uncle,—who like giving themselves the trouble of turning round and round for a few minutes every time they put on their belts or take them off, have them as long as 120 cubits (60 yards). The belt is worn as a sort of defensive armour. I have heard men assert that it will protect its wearer not only from a club blow or a sword cut, but even from the lance of an enemy; while others, who deny that it would resist a fair stroke of a lance, approve of it as a protection against blows which may glance off the shield, or which having pierced the shield (as they often do,

if from carelessness or clumsiness the lance point be allowed to fall perpendicularly on it) would otherwise wound, or perhaps kill, its owner.

The "quarry" is the principal article of Abyssinian dress: it is of cotton, and very fine and soft; those of the richer being finer but probably not so serviceable as those of the poorer class. It is made in three pieces; each piece is about three feet broad by fifteen feet long. Near both ends of each piece is a red stripe, five or six inches broad. To sew the three pieces together, one is first taken and doubled carefully, so that the red stripes of each end come exactly together. A second piece is then taken, and also folded, but inside out, and one half of it laid under and the other half over the first piece, so that the four red borders now come together. One edge of this quadruple cloth is then sewn from top to bottom, and the last-mentioned piece is turned back, so that the two together form one double cloth of two breadths. The third piece is now added in a similar manner, and the whole forms a "quarry," which, lest my reader should have got confused in the above description, is a white double cloth, with a red border near the bottom only; the breadth of the "quarry" is nine feet by seven and a half long. An inferior quality of this cloth is made of much coarser material, and without a stripe: this passes current in the markets of Tigrè, and is in fact their money; as salt, the Amhàra coin, and even dollars, are here counted as articles of commerce. The lower class of servants and working people wear these inferior cloths stitched together on common occasions, and perhaps have for Sunday best a "welda Gàber" or cheap "quarry" with a blue stripe. But above all is the "mergeff," a sort of cloth made after the fashion of the first-mentioned one, but of such fineness that it requires to be of six pieces instead of three to give it sufficient body, and is worn quadruple instead of double. Its stripe or border is of red, yellow, and blue silk, neatly worked together, instead of plain red cotton. Such an article of finery is, of course, worn only by ladies and some few great men. It might cost about 30s.

while the price of a good "quarry" would be about 12s. or less, according to its quality and the value of cotton in the market. The methods of putting on the cloth are as various as the modes of wearing a Highland plaid. One of the most ordinary ways is first to place it like a cloak over the shoulders; the right end, which is purposely left the longer, is then thrown over the left shoulder, and the bottom border, which would otherwise (from its length) trail on the ground, is gathered over the right shoulder. Thus the right arm is at liberty,* but the left covered. This, however, may be easily remedied by lifting up the left side of the cloth and placing it over the left shoulder in a moment, when both hands are required for any exercise.

Before sleeping, the men take off their belts and trousers without disarranging their cloth, which is of itself sufficient to keep them perfectly covered: and the women likewise divest themselves of their shirts. A bachelor rolls himself up in his cloth—head, feet, face, and all completely covered up. This I found at first a rather disagreeable mode of sleeping, but soon got accustomed to it, and ultimately even preferred it to any other. Married couples sleep in the same manner; that is, quite naked, but rolled up close together in a sort of hydropathic dry pack, or double mummy fashion. They manage this, however, very cleverly; and I have often, when sleeping in a room with two or three married couples, been astonished at the graceful manner in which they prepare their bed without in the least degree exposing their bodies. They are seated either on the floor or "arat," the man at the woman's right hand; and when it is proposed to retire to rest, they place the short side of their "quarries" under each other, and the long ones over, so that they remain in the middle; half of each of their cloths under them and half over, without any danger of their getting un-

* Both in colour and in the manner in which it is worn, the quarry of the Abyssinians may be seen to have much affinity with the toga of the ancient Romans, which, if my classic lore fail me not, was white, with a coloured border, and worn covering the left shoulder, but leaving the right arm at liberty

tucked. I have seen as many as five couple packed up in this manner, all huddled together on one skin; and often, when wishing to leave a room during the night, from the heat or closeness, have been unable to pass without waking up some of the sleepers on the floor, so closely were they packed—men, women, and children.

In battle, or at other times when freedom of action is required, the cloth is laid aside, and the “dino” or “lemd,” made of velvet, cloth, or the skin of some animal, is substituted. On ordinary occasions the latter kind is commonly worn over the “quarry” when out of doors, to prevent its being deranged by the wind.

In flaying an animal, if its skin be intended for wearing, the first incision is made down the side, lengthwise, and not along the belly. Then when the skin is completely taken off you will have a smooth upper edge above, and the skin of the belly and all four legs on the other side. If it be a small animal, such as an otter, lynx, calf, or lamb, the cutting-out and finishing must be rather different from that of the large skins. The lower half of the belly must be cut into strips of about two inches broad and three inches apart, and the pieces cut out from between them and stitched to them to lengthen them. Thus you will have left a body of about six inches broad, and eight strips hanging from the lower edge at equal distances, as a sort of fringe: they are the legs, tail, and the three strips described as cut out from the belly. In a large skin, however, you leave a broad body, and the strips are left simple, while in a small one they are often edged with yellow satin or calico, and the points cut into ornamental crosses or other devices. Of the larger sorts of skins, the most esteemed for ordinary wear is that of a peculiar sort of sheep found in the Galla countries of Yejjon and Wara Himano. Its wool is long and straight. I have seen some that measured a good deal above two feet. An ordinary skin will cost 10s. to 15s.; but if of the length of wool I have mentioned, from 12. to 17. 10s. If not naturally so, the best skins are usually dyed black, though the natural red and white are also worn by

some persons. I have been told that the existence of the unfortunate animals of this breed, like that of many European animals of a higher class in natural history, is entirely sacrificed to the cultivation of their exterior. They are said to be fed only on meat and milk, to be kept always on couches, and to have their hair combed and tressed regularly. Poor sheep! after such a life, it can astonish no one that, when killed and deprived of their beautiful skin, there should be found to remain (as I have heard) a framework of bones without any flesh on them.

The skins of the lion and black panther are worn by the very great warriors on battle days, reviews, or other pageants. A handsome one of the former may fetch from 6*l.* to 10*l.* Those with a nearly black mane are preferred. The "*càffey*," or velvet mantle, also an article of "*grande tenue*," is cut nearly after the same fashion as the skins, and, like the two last mentioned, its whole surface is often profusely ornamented with stars, crosses, and other appropriate devices, in silver and silver gilt. Teddely Hailo, chief of Tsàgaddy, has one ornamented for him by a Greek silversmith at Adoua, on which the silver of 150 German crowns was expended.

In placing calves' skins among those of the smaller animals, I should have said that I implied those calves taken out of cows slaughtered in calf. These, from their fineness, resembling velvet, are much esteemed by dandies, especially if black; whereas the skin of a calf which had come into the world in the regular way would only be worn by a ploughman.

Besides the skins I have already mentioned, I might name those of the jackal from Simyen, the wild cat, and the "*nebry gwolgwol*" (or leopard cat)—an animal resembling a leopard, but scarcely larger than a cat. Some persons have, however, a prejudice against the skin of the red jackal, as it is supposed that, should a lance piercing the skin inflict a wound on its wearer, and by ill luck a single hair of the jackal enter the wound, the patient is sure to die. All these "*dinoes*" are lined with red cloth, or chintz in which that colour predominates. The upper edge is neatly bound with

scarlet morocco leather an inch wide, along which are usually sewn one or two gold and silver tinsel threads: the ends are brought together and fastened with a double row of amulets in green and red leather, which, when the skin is worn, appear in front of the chest or on the shoulder. The skins of the dog and hyena are never worn, and those of leopards only by the *Zacchàri*, or followers of Abouna Àbel (a set of impostors, like some of the Asiatic derwishes), and by some soldiers of the Galla and Shoa tribes.

While on the subject of skins, it may not be uninteresting nor useless to state how they are dressed or tanned, if such expression be justifiable, as I have found no better means for preparing skins, not intended for setting up, in any country. The fresh flayed skin is usually stretched in the sun to dry: this is done by nicking small holes round its edge, and driving little pointed pegs through them into the ground. Dried in this manner, it of course becomes hard and stiff, but will keep in a dry place for a long time. To soften it, a mixture of clotted milk and linseed flour is spread on it, and allowed to soak in for a night. It is then taken and folded up, fur outside, and trampled on and worked by the feet for a considerable time every morning till it becomes as soft as a piece of rag. After each "pedipulation" it is put away, covered with fresh grass pressed down on it by heavy stones, to prevent its drying till the process is completed. When this operation has been continued some days, according to the quality of the skin, the fur is easily cleaned of whatever dirt may have attached to it, and the membrane of the skin may be peeled off, leaving it inside as soft as chamois leather, and quite white. If skins thus prepared are carefully packed up with a quantity of strong native tobacco, or black pepper, or—better than all—colocynth, they will be in no danger from insects. This method is of course only available for skins prepared flat, and can be of no use for stuffed specimens of natural history.

The men seldom wear any ornaments, excepting perhaps some strings of amulets, alternately silver and red morocco, or of the latter material only, and a plain silver hoop ring or

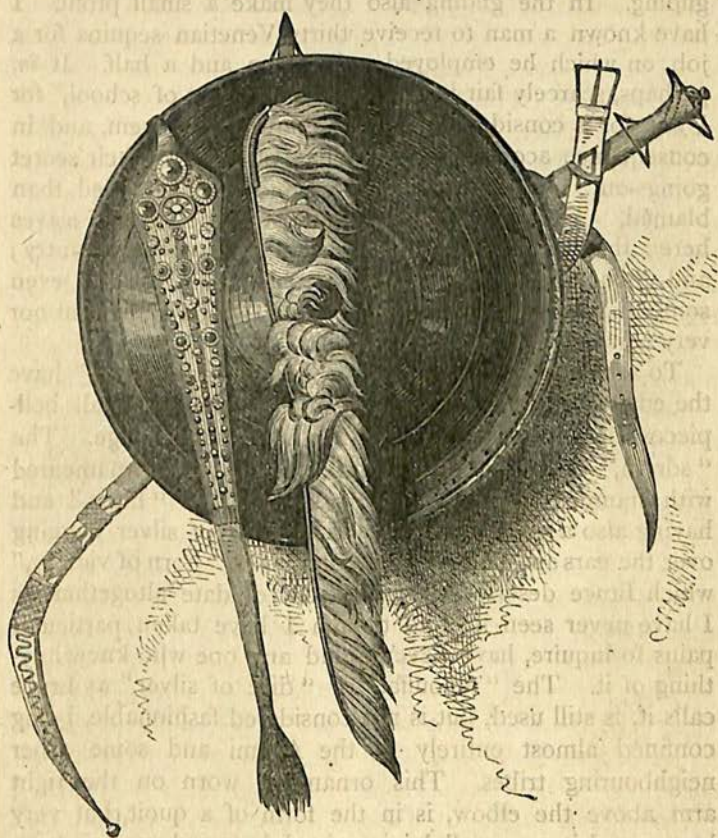
two. There are, however, exceptions to this rule, for some men wear silver chains round their necks (though properly speaking these are the distinguishing marks of one who has killed an elephant). Dandies wear their amulets to a great length; those of some horsemen may be seen crossing each other, and hanging from each of the shoulders to the opposite knee; a highly-ornamented silver case, made to contain a pair of tweezers for extracting thorns from the feet, is frequently appended to the buckle of the sword—some great men even wear silver anklets like the women. On state occasions, however, those whose prowess in battle, or more often now-a-days whose conduct, has earned for them their masters' favour, wear silver badges of merit. These are the "bitoa," a sort of bracelet, or rather armlet, of silver, worn on the right arm, from the wrist to near the elbow. They open with a hinge, and fasten with a bolt-pin, and are most commonly of a silver ground, with ornaments of flowers, stars, circles, &c., punched or chased on them, and partly gilt. I have seen some very beautiful ones (nay, on one occasion I helped to make one at the Greek silversmith Michaël's), that were simple polished silver with gilt *fil-et-grain* work placed over it, and a border to correspond. The gilding is usually made to assume a red colour by a simple process. This gives a rich appearance to the *fil-et-grain* work, while the polished silver appearing through adds lustre and lightness. This depth of colour pleases the natives, as they take it to be owing to the large quantity of gold used on it, whereas a charge of the commonest gunpowder is sufficient to redden any quantity of the very slight gilding they receive. The poor silversmiths here are obliged to be rogues, whether they like it or no. I believe they make a tolerably good thing of their business, but it is entirely by appropriating a large proportion of both the gold and silver intrusted to them for work. The silver they receive is in Maria Theresa dollars: what they return is, I should think, scarcely so good as a Turkish piastre, and in fact contains scarcely one-third of silver, if so much. They, however, are sensible enough (was a Greek ever wanting in cunning?) to

make the ornaments which are to be left plain silver of a far better quality than those gilt; for the purer the silver the more gold it requires to gild it, and the less durable the gilding. In the gilding also they make a small profit. I have known a man to receive thirty Venetian sequins for a job, on which he employed only seven and a half. It is, perhaps, scarcely fair in me to "tell tales out of school," for I was for a considerable time employed with them, and in consequence acquired a knowledge of many of their secret goings-on. But, in truth, they are more to be pitied than blamed. They are considered almost in the light of slaves here; that is, they are not allowed to leave the country; and though treated with considerable kindness, and even some distinction, their supplies are neither over-plentiful nor very regularly paid.

To return to the ornaments. Some of the "bitoa" have the edges further ornamented with a number of small bell-pieces of silver, hung by little chains as a fringe. The "sórora," or "kíllitcha," is a sort of coronet, ornamented with stamped or *fil-et-grain* work, like the "bitoa," and having also a quantity of bells and chains of silver hanging over the ears and neck of the wearer. The "horn of victory," which Bruce describes, must be out of date altogether, as I have never seen it; and though I have taken particular pains to inquire, have never found any one who knew anything of it. The "tchouffa," or "disc of silver," as Bruce calls it, is still used, but is not considered fashionable, being confined almost entirely to the Agami and some other neighbouring tribes. This ornament, worn on the right arm above the elbow, is in the form of a quoit, but very large; and it may well be imagined how awkward such an appendage must be to the wearer, and how dangerous to him, if by ill luck he should chance to fall, either when walking or riding. The "sórora" may require thirty dollars; the "tchouffa" from thirty to forty; the "bitoa" from fifteen to twenty-five.

The sword, spear, and shield are essentially the weapons of the Abyssinians, firearms being only of comparatively

recent introduction, and not generally used. The shields are round, and nearly a yard in diameter: they are very neatly made of buffalo's hide, and of the form most calcu-



Shield with Lion's Mane and Tail, and Sword ornamented with Silver Plates.

lated to throw off a lance-point; namely, falling back gradually from the boss or centre (which protrudes) to the edges. At the centre, in the inside, is fixed a solid leather handle, by which the shield is held in the hand when fighting. or through which the arm is passed to the elbow, for convenience of carrying on a journey. The edge is perforated

with a number of holes, through which leather loops are passed, and by these it is slung up in the houses. The face of the shield is often ornamented, in various ways, according to the wealth or fancy of the owner. Some have simply a narrow strip of lion's skin on each side of the boss, but crossing each other above and below it, the lower ends being allowed to hang at some length; others have a large broad strip of the mane down the centre of the shield, and hanging several inches below it. This is of course usually made of two or three pieces stitched together, as it would be difficult to get a single piece of sufficient length and beauty of fur. Others to this add a lion's paw or tail, fastened on the left side of the mane, and often highly adorned with silver. The beautiful long black and white fur of a sort of monkey, called "goréza," occasionally supplies the place of that of the nobler yet scarcely so beautiful animal. A shield, almost completely covered with plates and bosses of silver, is usually the mark of the chief of some district. Those similarly plated in brass were likewise formerly used only by chiefs, though now they are carried by every soldier who can afford to buy them. The plated shield is called "tebbora." Those in brass are not much approved of, as they usually cover a bad skin: for a man possessed of a good handsome shield would never think of hiding its intrinsic beauties with the baser metal.

In former times a beautiful crooked knife was used in Tigre, the sheath and handle of which were profusely enriched with silver and gilt. These, however, are never worn now. I have seen two or three in the possession of rich men and chiefs, to whom they have descended from their ancestors; but the long "shotel" in Tigre, and the European-shaped sword among the Amhàra and most of the soldiers, have entirely superseded them.

The "shotel" is an awkward-looking weapon. Some, if straight, would be nearly four feet long: they are two-edged, and curved to a semicircle, like a reaper's sickle. They are principally used to strike the point downwards over the guard of an adversary, and for this the long curved

shape is admirably adapted. It is, however, a very clumsy weapon to manage. The sheath is of red morocco leather, its point being often ornamented with a hollow silver ball, called "lomita," as large as a small apple. Many of the swords used are made in Europe, and are such as would be carried by the light cavalry, though lighter than ours. Being, however, cheap, showy articles, they are apt to break, and therefore the Abyssinians are getting tired of them, preferring those made of soft iron in their own country. These they make also with the faible considerably broader than the forte, to give force to the blow. Of course they bend on the least stress; but, in defence of this failing, their owners say that, if a sword breaks, who is to mend it?—while, if it bends, you have only to sit on it and it gets straight again. The handles of both this and the "shotel" are made of the horn of the rhinoceros. They are cut out of the horn at great loss of material, and hence they fetch a good price. It should be remembered that the heart of the horn is black outside of which is a coating, not quite an inch thick, of a semi-transparent white colour. To make a sword-handle, a piece of horn of the requisite length is first sawn off. This is then re-sawn longitudinally into three pieces, of which the inner one only is eligible for handles. This piece is about an inch and a half thick, four or five inches broad at the broader extremity, and three at the narrower. As it lies sawn flat before us we can distinctly see the black stripe in the centre, with the white on each side. Next, a nearly semicircular piece is cut out at each side, leaving only four points of the white as four corners, and the grasp black. The handle is then finished, bored for the shank of the blade, and polished. The shank is usually clinched over a half-dollar beaten convex: a *fil-et-grain* boss, called "tim-bora," is, however, sometimes substituted. A sword-hilt thus made is obviously a very clumsy one to handle, as the points are parallel to the edge, and those farthest from the blade are longest. I should scarcely mind a blow from a sword thus mounted, as, were the striker to give his wrist any play, in order to make his cut at all effective, he could,

not fail sending one of these highly ornamental but very useless points into his own wrist. A handsome hilt, such as we have described, without the "timbora," might cost about ten dollars, or 2*l.*, and from that down to 2*s.* The coating of some horns, instead of being white, is occasionally found to be of a bright blood-red, often marked in stripes. This, they say, is occasioned by the animal's having received a blow there. However it be, such horns are in Abyssinia considered valueless, while a Turk would give any price for them.

The sword is nearly always buckled on to the right side (according to European notions, the wrong one), some few gunners only wearing it on the left. The reason of this is, that in battle, when a man has thrown, or otherwise lost his lance, he would be obliged to uncover himself considerably in drawing his sword from across his body; whereas, by buckling it on the right side, he can avail himself of it without disturbing the position of his shield. Another reason is, that, when travelling, the left arm must, from the weight of the shield, keep swinging to and fro, and would thus be liable to meet the sharp points of the sword-hilt.

The spears used by most of the tribes inhabiting Eastern Africa are of rough construction: those of the Abyssinians, however, are, for the most part, very neatly made, and often even tastefully ornamented. Their usual length is 6 feet 6 inches, including the staff; of this, perhaps 2 feet are head, and 6 inches butt. They use, however, lighter ones, principally for throwing; and now and then one meets with spear-heads much longer in proportion than those I have described. I had one, of which the head and staff were equal. Most good spears are four-cornered—either diamond-shaped (that is, broader than they are deep) or perfectly square: the latter are, however, not so common as the former. In either case they have the sides grooved from the neck to within a few inches of the point; partly for lightness, and partly for ornament. There is an old-fashioned kind of spear, called "hellas"—little used now-a-days except in some of the frontier districts: it is two to three inches broad, and perfectly

flat, with the edges sharpened like a sword. The former kind is called "cutchin" (thin), and seldom exceeds an inch in breadth. Another sort I have good reason to remember, though it is seldom used or made in Abyssinia, the few that I have seen being, I believe, taken from the frontier tribes. Once, in a *melée*, I felt a scratch on my left side, a prick near my left elbow, and a tug at my cloth from behind. Turning round I found that I had dragging after me a very roughly-made lance, the head of which, barbed on each side like a saw, had fast hold of my garment, and could not be extricated except by pushing it through shaft and all. I kept it as a trophy, and not long after had double reason to rejoice that it had not struck me an inch or two more to the right. An unhappy jackal coming one night to pick up waifs and strays in our bivouac, I threw it at him, from where I lay, with no notion of hitting him. He howled and made off, dragging it with him. Next morning I found him dead and almost disembowelled.

Many of the Abyssinians are tolerably expert in the use of the lighter sort of lance, or javelin, striking a mark from thirty to fifty yards distant with much precision. The late Nebriid Welda Selassy and Lickommenquos Desta were said to be able to throw a lance over the great tree and column at Axum. Some of the soldiers, especially horsemen, carry two spears when in action; one of which they throw from a distance, and retain the other in the hand for close encounter. The Abyssinians throw the lance with the hand raised as high as the shoulder; while the Turks seldom raise the hand above the elbow when casting the "jerrid." In using the heavier spear, it is often allowed to slide through the hand as far as the butt, though never to leave the hand altogether. A good blow from a lance will, as I before said, sometimes pierce the toughest shield, and kill or wound the owner, if the shield be held square to receive the point: therefore an experienced soldier, skilful in the use of his arms, will always endeavour to receive it as obliquely as possible, and, if he can, will avoid the point altogether, allowing it to come very near, without actual contact, and

then throwing it off by a quick movement of his shield, striking the lance's side instead of its point.

It will easily be understood that even at *armes blanches*, a European who knows anything of the use of a sword can, without difficulty, master the best Abyssinian, notwithstanding his large shield. A slight feint will open his guard, and then you have him at your mercy ; for a shield is of considerable weight, and consequently not so manageable as a sword. The best way, as I have always found, is to make a feint at his head, which of course he will guard with his huge shield, thereby blindfolding his own eyes, while you have perfect leisure to amputate one or both of his naked legs, according to the strength and dexterity with which your blow shall be delivered. But if (for there is no rule without an exception) he should be too quick, or you too clumsy to succeed the first time in this manoeuvre, repeat the feint ; but, instead of aiming a second time at his legs (for which he will be prepared), let your feint be only part of a double cut at his head, the second part of which shall descend, with as much force as you can bestow, on his pericranium, at the very moment when he, anticipating a blow on his legs, shall have lowered his shield to protect them.

I have said nothing about the way in which the Abyssinian's blows are to be warded or avoided ; for I take it for granted that any one would know how to manage that without my telling him. Suffice it to say, it is not difficult. I have had many a friendly bout with the natives—a Turkish pipe-stick being my weapon, against a long bamboo and shield ; and I have always come off victorious, never finding a man who could in any way touch me. They have more than once challenged me to have a lance thrown at me from a distance. This, of course, was easier to evade than the other ; but, not being understood by them, they considered me a sort of Admirable Crichton in swordsmanship. A sword in the hand of an Abyssinian is almost useless, because he holds his shield before him with his left hand, and dares not to advance his right shoulder, lest he should uncover his body.

In the use of the gun the natives are in general exceedingly clumsy. They prefer large, heavy, matchlocks, to load which is a labour of some minutes. They carry their powder in hollow canes fitted into a leathern belt worn round the waist; and having no fixed charge, pour out at hazard a small quantity into the hand. This they measure with the eye, occasionally putting back a little if it appear too much, or adding a little if it seem not enough. After this operation has been performed two or three times, till they are pretty well satisfied as to the quantity, it is poured into the gun-barrel. The proper charge is now tested by the insertion of the ramrod. Lastly, when all is settled, some rag and a small bar or ball of roughly-wrought iron are rammed down. This last operation (with the exception that the ramrod often sticks in the rag for half an hour) is not difficult, as the ball is made of about a quarter of an inch less diameter than the bore of the piece for which it is intended. It is great fun to see these gunners, when taken unawares by a sudden alarm: one can't find his flint, another has lost his steel; then there is the striking of a light, blowing the match, priming the gun, fixing the match to a proper length and direction; and, lastly, sticking into the ground the rest,* which nearly all of them use, especially if their piece be of the heavy description. There is one thing in their favour—that the mere sound of driving in the rest is generally sufficient to turn away the bravest Abyssinian cavalry that ever charged.

But while I have been describing the men, their dress and arms, a dozen or two of the fair sex have been waiting to have their portraits taken, or rather, that I should put a dress on to the naked description I have already given of their persons.

The women of Abyssinia are dressed quite as decently as any women in the world, without having a particle of the trouble of the ladies of more civilized nations. There is a distinguishing costume for young girls, and for those who,

* The "rest" is a staff of male bamboo shod with an iron spike, and with two or three forks left to rest the barrel of a gun on for taking aim.

from being married or otherwise, are no longer considered as such. The dress of the former is indeed rather slight, though far more picturesque than that of the latter. Down



An Abyssinian Lady of Fashion.

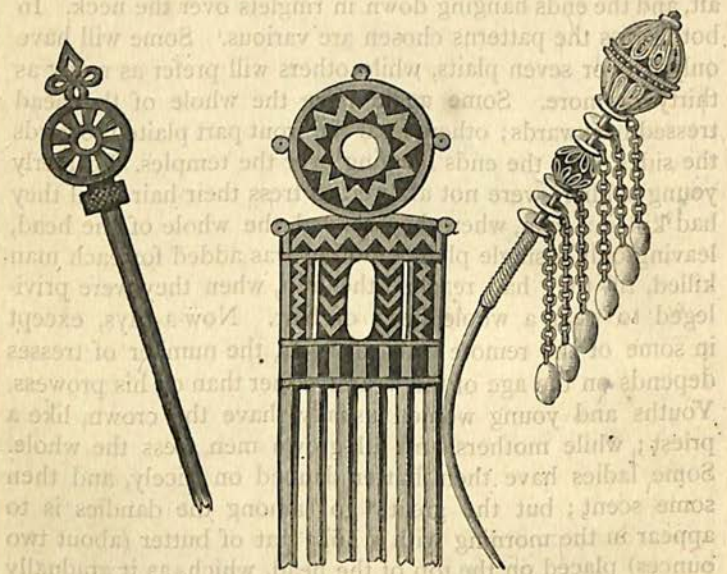
in our part of the country (about Shire) the girls merely wear a piece of cotton stuff wrapped round the waist and hanging down almost to the knee, and another (or the end of the former if it be long enough) thrown over the left shoulder, so as to leave the right arm and breast exposed. In other parts of Tigrè a black goat-skin, ornamented with

cowries, is often substituted for this latter. An ordinary woman wears a large loose shirt down to the feet, with sleeves made tight towards the wrist. This with a "quarry" similar to those of the men, but worn rather differently, and a parasol when out of doors, is a complete suit. A fine lady, however, has a splendid "mergeff quarry," as before described, and her shirt is made probably of calico from Manchester, instead of the country fabric, and richly-embroidered in silk of divers colours and various patterns round the neck, down the front, and on the cuffs. She will also, of course, own a mule; and then may choose to wear (alas, that it should be so even in Abyssinia!) the inexpressibles. These are made of calico, and rather loose, but getting gradually tighter at the ankle, where they are embroidered like the shirt.

The fair sex all over the world are fond of ornaments. In Abyssinia they wear a profusion of silver, in the shape of chains, bracelets, &c.; or, to be more explicit, a well-dressed lady will hang three or four sets of amulets about her neck, as well as her blue cord, and a large flat silver case (purporting to contain a talisman, but more often some scented cotton) ornamented with a lot of little bells hanging to the bottom edge of it, and the whole suspended by four chains of the same metal. Three pair of massive silver and gilt bracelets are on her wrists, and a similar number of "bangles" on her ankles; while over her insteps and to her heels are a quantity of little silver ornaments, strung like beads on a silk cord. Her fingers (even the upper joints) are covered with plain rings, often alternately of silver and silver-gilt; and a silver hair-pin, something similar to those now worn by English ladies, completes her decoration. Women of the poorer class, and ladies on ordinary occasions, wear ivory or wooden pins neatly carved in various patterns, and stained red with henna-leaves. The Abyssinian ladies, like those of most Eastern nations, stain their hands and feet with henna, and darken their eyelids with antimony.

In general, neither sex wears any covering on the head, preferring to tress and butter that with which nature has provided them. The hair of the Abyssinians is admirably

adapted for this purpose, being neither short and crisp like a negro's, nor yet of the soft elasticity of a European's, but between the two; sufficiently long to tress well, and even often to hang luxuriantly over the shoulders, but at the same time sufficiently woolly to prevent its being liable to come



1, 2. Hair-pins made of hard wood, and stained with henna.

3. Ditto, of silver and gilt fil-et-grain work.

(About one half usual size.)

out of plait as soon as it is done, which ours always does. I had the greatest bother in the world with mine. In the first place, it required twice as much pulling as anybody else's, otherwise it would not have remained a moment in its place; and then it had to be tied at the ends and stuck with a "fixature" of boiled cotton-seeds; and after all, it never lasted in plait more than a week.

The operation of tressing is a very tedious one, usually occupying an hour or two per head; therefore, of course, it is repeated as seldom as possible; by some great dandies once a fortnight; by others once a month, or even less fre-

quently. In the interim large supplies of fresh butter are employed, when obtainable, in order to prevent the chance of a settlement of vermin; and a piece of stick, like a skewer, is used for scratching. The hair is gathered in plaits close over the whole surface of the head, the lines running fore and aft, and the ends hanging down in ringlets over the neck. In both sexes the patterns chosen are various. Some will have only five or seven plaits, while others will prefer as many as thirty or more. Some again have the whole of the head tressed backwards; others wear the front part plaited towards the sides, with the ends hanging over the temples. Formerly young soldiers were not allowed to tress their hair until they had killed a man, when they shaved the whole of the head, leaving only a single plait; another was added for each man killed, till they had reached the fifth, when they were privileged to wear a whole head of hair. Now-a-days, except in some of the remote Galla districts, the number of tresses depends on the age of the wearer rather than on his prowess. Youths and young women usually shave the crown, like a priest; while mothers and full-grown men tress the whole. Some ladies have their butter daubed on nicely, and then some scent; but the great "go" among the dandies is to appear in the morning with a huge pat of butter (about two ounces) placed on the top of the head, which, as it gradually melts in the sun, runs over the hair down the neck, over the forehead, and often into the eyes, thereby causing much smarting. This last ingression, however, the gentleman usually prevents by wiping his forehead frequently with his hand or the corner of his "quarry."

As may be imagined, the dresses neither of the women nor men are long free from grease; but this, especially among the latter sex, is of no importance: indeed, many young men among the soldiery consider a clean cloth as "slow," and appropriate only for a townsman or a woman. These never have their quarries washed from one St. John's day to another: even the young Prince Shétou is more often seen in a black quarry than a white one.

The Tigraean ladies, and some men, tattoo themselves,

though, as this mode of adorning the person is not common excepting among the inhabitants of the capital and persons who have passed some time there, I should judge it to be a fashion imported from the Amhàra. The men seldom tattoo



Tattooed Lady.

more than one ornament on the upper part of the arm, near the shoulder, while the women cover nearly the whole of their bodies with stars, lines, and crosses, often rather tastefully arranged. They mark the neck, shoulders, breasts, and arms, down to the fingers, which are enriched with lines to

imitate rings, nearly to the nails. The feet, ankles, and calves of the legs, are similarly adorned, and even the gums are by some pricked entirely blue, while others have them striped alternately blue and the natural pink. To see some of their designs, one would give them credit for some skill in the handling of their pencil ; but, in fact, their system of drawing the pattern is purely mechanical. I had one arm adorned ; a rather blind old woman was the artist ; her implements consisted of a little pot of some sort of blacking, made, she told me, of charred herbs ; a large home-made iron pin, about one-fourth of an inch at the end of which was ground fine ; a bit or two of hollow cane, and a piece of straw : the two last-named items were her substitutes for pencils. Her circles were made by dipping the end of a piece of cane of the required size into the blacking, and making its impression on the skin ; while an end of the straw, bent to the proper length, and likewise blackened, marked all the lines, squares, diamonds, &c., which were to be of equal length. Her design being thus completed, she worked away on it with her pin, which she dug in as far as the thin part would enter, keeping the supply of blacking sufficient, and going over the same ground repeatedly to ensure regularity and unity in the lines. With some persons, the first effect of this tattooing is to produce a considerable amount of fever, from the irritation caused by the punctures ; especially so with the ladies, from the extent of surface thus rendered sore. To allay this irritation they are generally obliged to remain for a few days in a case of vegetable matter, which is plastered all over them in the form of a sort of green poultice. A scab forms over the tattooing, which should not be picked off, but allowed to fall off of itself. When this disappears, the operation is complete, and the marks are indelible ; nay, more, the Abyssinians declare that they may be traced on the person's bones even after death has bared them of their fleshy covering.

The extremities are the most neglected parts of an Abyssinian : his feet, like his head, are seldom covered. Great ladies, and some one or two elderly chiefs, wear a sort of

clumsy shoe made of red or black leather, with the toes very much turned back, like some of the Indians'. The shoes of the women are occasionally ornamented with silver. For the rest, a few merchants of Adoua, principally Mussulmen, have learnt the use of sandals from their intercourse with the people of the coast; but these are worn only in the town, being considered as highly troublesome for the road.



Abyssinian Horsemen.

While on the subject of dress, &c., I may as well advert to that of the mules and horses. Most men pretending to anything like gentility are possessed of one or other, or one of each of these animals. The horse is never used on the road, but led before his master, like the war-horse of an ancient knight, while the owner follows on an ambling mule. The price of a mule sometimes exceeds that of a horse. Dejatch Oubi had one that cost 120 dollars, or about 25*l*. The ordi-

nary mule for carrying baggage costs at Adoua about 8 or 10 dollars, while a good ambler may be bought for about 30. In like manner, a horse may be bought for 5 or 6 dollars; a good one will cost 50 to 70; but the price rarely exceeds 100. The horse's head-stall is of white or red leather: a strap, ornamented with circular plates of brass, is placed down his forehead and nose, reaching from his forelock to his nostril. This appendage is called "bennitcha" or "mennitcha." The plates gradually increase in size downwards, the smallest (which is the highest up on the string) being of the size of a crown-piece, or thereabout, while the one on the nose is perhaps three inches in diameter. Each of them has a brass spike protruding from its centre. The bridle is usually of round plaited leather, nearly an inch in diameter, and covered with scarlet cloth. Like many of the Oriental nations, the Abyssinians have no idea of handling the rein as we do, but merely guide or stop their horses by means of a small leather loop, fixed on the clumsy rein and through which the little finger is passed. The horse's throat is slung round with a set of eight fine copper chains (to which hangs a small bell), and occasionally with a broad set of leathern charms, alternately red and green. The saddles most esteemed are those made in some of the Galla countries. They are of wood, and covered with untanned leather. The pommel and cantle are very high, Arab fashion: the former is furnished with a large knob, which, however, protrudes inwards instead of outwards, thereby endangering the stomach of an awkward rider. The saddle is covered with a shabracque of scarlet cloth, the swallow tails of which hang straight downwards till they nearly touch the ground. By way of stirrups, the Abyssinians use small iron rings, through which the great toe, or, at most, the two first toes, are passed.

The mule's furniture nearly resembles that of the horse: there is a slight difference in the shape of the saddle, and the shabracque is made of leather instead of cloth. Round the neck they wear a "soullissy," or band of leather thongs; to this, by means of small chains, are appended a large number of brass plates, the jingling of which makes a pretty

noise when the animal is ambling. Rich persons have the shabracque embroidered in a sort of mosaic of different coloured leathers, in grotesque patterns of lions, men, &c. This is called "mergeff coratcha." The plates of the "soullissy," which is worn with this fancy saddle, are also much smaller and more numerous than those of an ordinary one. Some persons, great dandies, have their horses' furniture mounted in silver instead of brass; and the Empress Mennin has a mule's "soullissy" made of that metal. Neither horses nor mules are shod, although the country is in most places very rough and stony.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BIRTHS AND MARRIAGES.

IN the earlier chapters I have not only described a house, but furnished it, prepared food, and placed each servant at his particular avocation. Still the master is wanting ; and no doubt all will allow him to be a rather essential part of the establishment. In order that my readers may feel sufficient interest in him, I will introduce them at his birth.

First, then, we will pay a visit to his respectable mother, whom we will imagine to have already invited her neighbours and friends to assist her. All who are at liberty and sufficiently good-natured come at her bidding, and watch with her day and night till the critical moment arrives. We will suppose ourselves at the door at this time. The ladies of our party may walk in, but the gentlemen must remain outside, and be satisfied with what they can hereafter glean from the women, as to the events which may have taken place in the apartment. And this not only for obvious reasons, but because the room, and everything in it, is considered so utterly unclean till properly purified, that a man who should enter would be refused admittance to the church for forty days.

As soon as the child is born it is washed in cold water and perfumed, and a woman then moulds its head and different features, by pressing them with her fingers, in order to make them handsome, while a man pokes a lance into his mouth, if a boy, to make him courageous. He does this through the window, most carefully avoiding entering the chamber. At the same time a little boy cuts the throat of a fowl before the new-born babe, and the women fill the air with cries of

exultation ; repeating their cry twelve times if the infant be a male, and three times if a female. They then all rush out into the court, singing and dancing like so many bacchanals : and woe betide the man who is unlucky enough to be caught by them ; for they surround him, and by their yelling, singing, dancing, and screaming, literally stupify him ; nor do they let him go till he has promised them a ransom, either of beer or money, or some other kind of present. I remember once, at the house of a friend at Adoua, I was awakened early in the morning, long before sunrise, by the "Zugarit" from the women, which proclaimed the birth of a female child. I was congratulating the father, but he cut me short, telling me that the best thing we could do was to betake ourselves to the housetop, in order to keep out of the way of the women, who would no doubt immediately turn out in pursuit of us. We did so, followed by all the menservants ; but scarcely half of us had time to escape before the women rushed out and succeeded in capturing a few of the men, each of whom gave something to be let off and then mounted to join us as spectators of the capture of visitors or others who might arrive to congratulate the father.

Three days after the birth they go through a similar ceremony on the occasion of carrying the mother's clothes to a brook to be washed ; and every male friend captured on the road is treated as we have just described. On the same day there is also a merrymaking in the house. The women all eat porridge, which has been the mother's food since her confinement, and the flour of which she prepared with her own hands before that event took place. The child is usually nursed by a neighbour till the mother can take it herself ; and butter, and sometimes even honey and milk, are crammed into its mouth. After eight days the child is circumcised, be it male or female, and on the tenth day, if it be a boy, or on the twentieth day, if a girl, the priests come with all the pomp and ceremony of the Church—crosses, incense, &c., and purify the house, sprinkling it with holy water. On the day of the child's birth the priest makes his calculation as to when it is to be baptized, informing the

father (who probably cannot read, or, if he can, does not perhaps possess an almanac) of the particular day on which the ceremony must take place—forty days after the birth of a boy, and eighty after that of a girl. On inquiring why so long a time is allowed to elapse, and whether it might not be curtailed in case of sickness, I was informed that it might be shortened if absolutely necessary, and that the reason of the delay in ordinary cases is, that according to their traditions our first parents did not receive the Holy Spirit until they had been created that time respectively. The Abyssinians are, however, very particular that the exact day should be kept; so much so, that if the father miscalculates the day and is not forthcoming, he is subjected to a heavy penance. The priest would probably order him a year's fasting; but a trifling sum as a present to the Church (which means in fact a present to the priest) would readily induce him to commute the period to a month or two. It sometimes happens that the priest himself miscalculates, and assigns a wrong day; in which case he has to undergo the penance that he would have inflicted on the father.

The parties having arrived at the church, the priest receives the child from the godfather, places his hand on its head, and pours on it a little water. He then takes oil, and signs the cross on the child's head, hands, breast, and knees, and concludes by tying round its neck a plaited cord of red, blue, and white silk, as an outward sign of Christianity. (This cord is afterwards exchanged for the blue one usually worn.) The priest then returns the infant to its godfather, exhorting him to support and educate it, and look after its welfare, spiritual and temporal, as though it were his own child. This the sponsor promises to do; but pays no more attention to his promise than do our good godfathers and godmothers in England; only, should he die childless, his godson is considered the lawful heir to his property. After the conclusion of the ceremony the priest returns with the whole party to the father's house, where a great feast is prepared in honour of the occasion.

The children are not much troubled with education. The

sons, and sometimes even the daughters, of great men and priests are taught to read a little, and to repeat by heart a few chapters of the Psalms or other portions of the Scriptures ; but as these are mostly in the "Geez" or ancient Æthiopic language (rarely intelligible except to men who profess something more than an ordinary education), so little do they learn that when obliged to occupy themselves in the pursuits of life, upon which they usually enter at an early age, they seldom retain any vestiges of literary instruction. The children of the poorer classes have not the advantage of even these few mental acquirements. The boys are turned out wild to look after the sheep and cattle ; and the girls from early childhood are sent to fetch water from the well or brook, first in a gourd, and afterwards in a jar proportioned to their strength. These occupations are not conducive to the morality of either sex. If the well be far from the village, the girls usually form parties to go thither, and amuse themselves on the road by singing sentimental or love songs ; while, during their halt at the well for an hour or so, they engage in romps of all kinds, in which parties of the other sex frequently join. This early licence lays the foundation for worse, when at a later period they are sent to the woods to collect fuel. Besides out-door avocations, the girls assist their mothers in domestic matters, such as grinding corn, cooking, &c.

Ladies of the higher classes seldom employ themselves except in spinning, which they do seated on the ground. In their left hand they hold the cotton, and in their right a bobbin, with which they gradually draw out the cotton to a regular thickness for a thread, then twist it by rubbing the bobbin on the bare thigh, and letting it spin for a moment : the thread is then wound on it, and a fresh one drawn out. In this manner thread is made of various qualities, and is kept in hanks for weaving into quarries, common cloths, trousers, belts, &c. The weavers in Tigre are chiefly Musulmen, though some of them are Christians. They use a very rough kind of handloom, placed over a hole in the ground, like a saw-pit. The red border of the "quarry" is

made out of a sort of coarse red cotton fabric, which is imported from India. It is unravelled, and the threads are rewoven into the "quarry." They call the red stuff "indikky," and prefer it to red thread, though the latter be of a superior quality.

In Abyssinia young people begin to think of marriage at a very early age. I have seen brides of eight or nine years old; and boys at a proportionally youthful age are considered marriageable. When a lad wishes to marry, he only inquires for a girl who may possess twice the number of oxen that he can muster, or their value. His proposals are made to the girl's father, and, unless there is some strong motive for rejecting him, he is accepted, and everything is arranged without consulting the lady's taste or asking her consent. They are usually betrothed three or four months before marriage, during which time the bridegroom frequently visits his father-in-law elect, and occasionally propitiates him with presents of honey, butter, a sheep, or a goat; but he is never allowed to see his intended wife even for a moment, unless, by urgent entreaty or a handsome bribe, he induces some female friend of hers to arrange the matter, by procuring him a glance at his cruel fair one. For this purpose he conceals himself behind a door or other convenient hiding-place, while the lady, on some pretext or other, is led past it. Should she, however, suspect a trick, and discover him, she would make a great uproar, cover her face, and, screaming, run away and hide herself, as though her sense of propriety were greatly offended by the intrusion; although previous to his making the offer she would have thought it no harm to romp with him, or any other male acquaintance, in the most free and easy manner. Even after she has been betrothed, she is at home to every one except to him who most sighs for the light of her countenance.

In Tigre, and especially in Shiré, there is a superstition, that if a girl leave her father's house during the interval between her betrothal and marriage she will be bitten by a snake.

When the wedding-day approaches, the girl is well washed,

her hair combed and tressed, and she is rendered in every way as agreeable as possible. She has then to undergo a course of diet, and medicine, for the purpose of obviating any inconvenience that might arise from the farinaceous food on which the people principally subsist. A day or two before that appointed for the marriage, a "dass" or bower is erected. It is made of a framework of stakes. The uprights are driven into the ground, and the horizontal stakes fastened to them by ligaments of bark or of supple shoots of trees, and covered with green branches to protect the interior from the sun. Of wet there is no fear, except in the season of the periodical rains. These bowers are made large or small, according to the number of visitors likely to be assembled. All the friends who have been invited arrive in the course of the afternoon of the previous day; and if the wedding takes place in a town, a servant is usually sent to call the guests of distinction.

During my stay at Adoua I was invited to several weddings; among others, I was asked to the house of the Greek tailor, Demetrius, or "Seedy Petros," as he is more commonly called here, to assist at the marriage of his daughter by an Abyssinian woman to a man of the country. When the wedding takes place in a town, as was the case on this occasion, the crowd is excessive: invited or uninvited, everybody comes who has nothing better to do, or who is anxious to fill his stomach. A crowd of these hungry idlers congregate round the door, and often endeavour to force an entrance, where artifice or good words fail to procure it for them, and thus give a great deal of annoyance to the servants appointed to keep the doors. These, however, are assisted by a number of young men from among the neighbours and friends of the house, who on such occasions volunteer their services as "agafari" and waiters, or to make themselves generally useful. Several of these, armed like the doorkeepers with long wands, remain in the "dass" to keep order, to show people their places, and to make way for new-comers by dismissing old ones.

About two o'clock in the afternoon of the day preceding the wedding, "Seedy Petros" sent a servant to conduct me

to the scene of festivity; but on our arrival at the front entrance we found the street completely blocked by the crowd, principally soldiers, who were endeavouring to force their way in, which, however, was prevented by barricading the gates and strongly guarding them. A back entrance in a by-street was now proposed by the servant who accompanied me, and thither we turned, but it was as well known to the mob as to us, and was quite as much beset as the front. The street, however, being narrower, the press was not so great, and the "agafàri" had more control over the ingress, being able to admit whom they chose, and to keep out intruders. It was not, however, till after nearly a quarter of an hour's fighting and squeezing that we succeeded in effecting an entrance. During the struggle I was amused with the contrivances which the mob had recourse to in the hope of passing in with me and my people. One fierce-looking soldier assisted me very much; for by striking some, and swearing at and threatening others, he succeeded in clearing a passage to the door. My people, however, were too well known for him to pass as one of them, and he was refused admittance till I, in consideration of his zeal, protested that, for that day, he was in my service. Another took me by the hand, and adjured me by the Virgin Mary, by St. Michael, and by the back of Oubi, that I should not let go his hand till he gave me permission, which he took care not to do till he was fairly inside. A third, who had an umbrella, walked close behind me, holding it over my head as if it belonged to me; and various other artifices were tried. At last we entered; but we found nearly as much difficulty in getting from the yard into the "dass" as we had done in passing from the street into the yard—the crowd being almost as dense, and quite as unruly. The people who had fed, and those who had not, were mixed together; the former presenting themselves a second time for admittance, while many of those who had had nothing were refused entry by mistake. This gave rise to a terrible scene of confusion, quarrelling, and uproar; and we were glad to find that our worthy host had reserved a place

where the whites were to be seated alone. We were seven in all :—Demetrius, the master of the feast ; an Albanian silversmith, who had run away from Khartoum with a quantity of silver which had been given him to be worked ; a Copt who had been servant to a priest ; a man named “Welda Rafael,” whose grandfather was an Armenian ; Hajji Yohannes (who had been a coiner), also Armenian ; and old Hajji Ali, who had been a servant of some of the Mamelukes, and had fled with them from Egypt. Such was our select party ; and though most of them, from long residence in the country, must have been well accustomed to Abyssinian manners, yet each preferred a seat on the couch, anxious to arrogate to himself the superiority of white descent. One, however, called “Ingeder,” son of a Greek named Apostoli, had been accustomed to eat raw beef from childhood, and preferred it and Abyssinian society to all such vain distinctions.

The Abyssinian guests were squatted round the tables in long rows, feeding as if their lives depended on the quantity they could devour, and washing it down with floods of drink. I never could have believed that any people could take so much food ; and certainly, if the reader wishes to see a curious exhibition in the feeding line, he has only to run over to Abyssinia, and be present at a wedding feast. Imagine two or three hundred half-naked men and women all in one room, eating and drinking in the way I have described in a former chapter, but with this difference—that the private party is well-ordered and arranged, while the public “hang-out” is a scene of the most terrible confusion. Here all decorum is lost sight of ; and you see the waiters, each with a huge piece of raw beef in his hands, rushing frantically to and fro in his desire to satisfy the voracious appetites of the guests who, as he comes within their reach, grasp the meat, and with their long crooked swords hack off a lump or strip, as the case may be, in their eagerness not to lose their share. One man was reported on this occasion to have eaten “tallak” and “tamash” of raw beef (each weighing from four to five pounds) and

seven cakes of bread, and to have drunk twenty-six pints of beer and "tedge." From what I saw I can believe a good deal; but this appears rather a "stretcher." We of the Frank seat were presented with our share of the "broundo," &c.; but as our thoughtful host had informed us that a dinner, cooked by his own hands in the Turkish style, was awaiting us in an inner apartment, we merely, for formality's sake, tasted the offered delicacies, and then handed them over to our servants, who standing behind us were ready enough to make away with them. The silversmith, Michaël, before coming to the feast, had, it would appear, been pouring a copious libation to some god or other, for he was considerably elevated, and being anxious to show off, commenced eating in the Abyssinian fashion, nor did he stop until he had cut a large gash in his nose.

It was amusing to watch the fights between the doorkeepers and the mob, who were continually trying to force their way in before their turn. It could scarcely be said to have been a fair fight, as no one would think of returning a blow to one of these officers, whose persons are held sacred while in the performance of their duty. In fact, to strike a servant would be in such a case equivalent to striking his master. The doorkeepers, however, use no such ceremony; for not only do they strike on the shields, but even, when much pressed, give tolerably hard blows on the bodies of the intruders. As soon as one batch of guests were well fed they were turned out, neck and crop, to make way for another batch, who were equally roughly jammed and pushed into their places, taking their turn, when well filled, to be kicked out. This succession of feeding continued till near nightfall. We in the mean time had entered the inner room, and discussed some "kabâbs," a "pillaf," and sundry other Northern preparations.

After this, the "dass" being cleared of all but a select party of the invited friends of the house, and their attendants, in all about a hundred persons, it was announced that the bride was to be presented to us. She was accordingly brought in, carried like a sack of flour on the back of a

male relative, who trotted in with her, preceded by a number of persons, each bearing a lighted taper, and followed by a crowd of women, who filled the air with their shrill cries. The bearer dropped his pack on a stool, in front of the place where we Franks and the elders were sitting, and she received the benediction of the party. Placing our hands on her head, one after the other, we each expressed some wish for her future welfare and happiness, and got our hands well greased for our pains. Music and dancing then began.

But before we proceed we will give some idea of the means and methods they possess in this land for cultivating the Muses. Their musical instruments are not of much variety, nor of great compass. The "negarit," or big drums, are used only by great chieftains of the highest rank. In Tigrè certain provinces give a right to the use of the "negarit" to the chief who governs them. Oubi uses forty-four; each of his sons thirty-two; other chieftains sixteen or twenty. Minor governments use the "ambilta" and "cundan melakhat," and others the latter only. The "ambilta" are a set of five or six pipes, or fifes, blown like Pan pipes, except that each performer blows one only, every pipe having a different note, depending on the length or thickness of the instrument. They are played in turns, like the Russian horn-band, and produce a tune more or less resembling the chimes of village church bells, prettily executed. They are made of the "shamboko," a kind of hollow reed or bamboo. The "cundan melakhat" consists of four long tubes made of cane hollowed, with a bell mouth and reed mouthpiece like a clarinet. Their note is harsh and disagreeable, and they are played in turns like the "ambilta," and always accompanied by a small drum. The instrument most commonly used by the people of the country, to give time to their dancing, or as an accompaniment to their songs, is this "cobero," which is very similar to the Egyptian "darabouka," and, like it, is beaten with the hands: two or three of them are frequently played together. It appears to be used by nearly all the nations of

this part of Africa; but every country, and even tribe, has its peculiar way of striking it. They have also a sort of flute, which is blown from the thick end, and has four holes: and a kind of guitar or lyre, which they play as the Turks and Arabs do theirs—a bit of wood or horn, held in the right hand, being struck backwards and forwards across the strings, while with the fingers of the left hand they are touched guitar fashion, so as to produce the tune. The “cobero” is suspended by a strap to the shoulder of the player, who, standing up, marks the time by swinging his body to and fro with more or less grace, while the spectators stand in a ring, taking it in turns to dance. The commonest dance of Tigrè is a sort of chassée in a circle. They keep time to the music by shrugging their shoulders and working their elbows backwards and forwards. At certain parts of the dance they all squat down at once, shrugging away more furiously than before. At times, also, some clever dancer or danseuse will execute a *pas seul*: or a *pas de deux* will be performed by two entering the circle together and throwing themselves backwards and forwards, and squatting, varied by other equally elegant attitudes, while the shrugging is never omitted. Some of the bystanders keep time by clapping their hands and singing; and the girls in the outer circle, crossing their arms over each other’s shoulders, sway their bodies in a *really* very graceful manner.

This dance was now performed by the relations of the bride-elect; among them, her old mother, a shrivelled ugly piece of antiquity, actively capered about with a “makhom-biya” (a straw dish-cover) as a hat, by way of distinction, which she occasionally took off, twirling it with her fingers over her head, with a most affected would-be-Taglioni sort of grimace. This continued for an hour or more, when the bride expressed her intention of also displaying her agility to the company.

Young women, when they dance, often wear for the occasion the “dino,” or sheepskin, of the men. I had a very handsome one on that evening, and, taking it off, I begged

the bride would deign to honour it by wearing it at her bridal dance. Poor girl! she was a most wretched victim of interested motives. The passions of her darker mother's race, combined with the Greek pride she derived from her father, must have rendered her marriage with an elderly nigger not a little disagreeable. Thus much may be said for her husband, that he was a man of great experience, and quite capable of supplying the place of the father she was about to quit. He was forty-five years old, according to his own account, and quite as old as a man of sixty would be in England. She was a pretty child of twelve years only. He was, moreover, horribly ugly and disgustingly dirty. But all this was counterbalanced by the fact of his being the owner of twelve oxen, which was all that was required of him by his estimable stepfather.

Poor Fittick stood up, wearing my "dino," and, though evidently not in the merriest of moods, received, after she had gone her round once or twice, the merited or unmerited applause of the company. An old gentleman, a would-be-young beau, a sort of Abyssinian pump-room dandy, followed her round in a very elegant manner, politely spreading his cloth over her on one side, as a screen at once from the dust and from the "evil-eye." They varied this dance with the "deball," a kind of war-dance, performed by the men only, with guns and spears; a description of which I shall have more leisure to give in the account of the next day's festivities. Thus they kept it up all night, "till daylight did appear," as the old song says; but I had long ere that time betaken myself to my peaceful dwelling.

While this merrymaking was going on at the bride's house, a similar entertainment was taking place at the bridegroom's, whose friends had also assembled; and in the forenoon of the following day, when we had all met again in the "dass," he made his appearance. But as the manner in which he journeys from his own house to that of his bride is rather interesting, from the pomp and ceremony attending it, and as I myself had on more than one occasion formed one of a similar party, I will now for a moment

leave the bride's family and friends waiting in the "dass," and accompany the bridegroom on his way thither.

Having kept up the dancing and jollification all night, the bridegroom (should the habitation of the bride be at some distance from his own) sets out at sunrise, followed by a host of friends and attendants, the number of whom it may be readily conceived does not much depend on any respect they feel for him personally, but is proportioned to the estimated generosity of his father-in-law elect, and to the quantity of bread, meat, and beer which they may calculate on finding prepared at his house. After him follow, first, his "arkees," who vary in number from six to twelve, according to the wealth and importance of the person. These "arkees" are chosen among themselves when boys. They agree, when playmates together, that when either of them marries they shall reciprocally act as "arkees," or *bridesmen*, to each other. Their office and duties will be more fully explained by-and-by. The whole party is well dressed: those who have no clothes, or bad clothes, borrow good ones for the occasion. He that owns a horse or mule mounts it: the others, but more especially the "arkees," who come out "heavy swells," borrow every article of finery they can possibly lay eyes on, even to the silver amulets and chains belonging to the women of the neighbourhood. Behind the bridegroom is borne a handsome silver-mounted shield, probably belonging to his master, or some other great man who may have been kind enough to lend it to him for the occasion; and before him go a considerable number of men carrying guns, all borrowed; and perhaps the "ambilta" and "cundan" of the chief of his province are lent for the occasion, and played before him the whole length of the road. He himself mounts, perhaps for the first time in his life, a handsome mule, with its "mergeff coratcha" and "soulissy" (ornamented patchwork morocco leather saddle, and brass neck-ornaments), and, with his cloth affectedly placed over his nose, carries himself gallantly, and looks as proud as if he were a king's son, and as if the gunners, shield-bearers,

mules, finery, and all really belonged to him ; though perhaps only the day before he was toiling and cracking his whip behind his plough oxen.

When arrived near the bride's house, the nearest convenient plain is selected, and the horsemen of the party commence galloping about, the gunners fire off their matchlocks, and the lancers dash here and there, enacting altogether a sort of sham-fight. This, I suppose, is done to divert the bridegroom's mind, lest he should be nervous on first entering the "dass." Arrived at the bridal bower, he takes his seat on the post of honour prepared for him, which is a couch covered with a carpet and cushions, and a canopy of white calico spread over his head to keep the dust from falling on him. And there he sits in state ; his nose and mouth covered with his garment to look dignified ; while his master, or chief, is probably squatting on the ground at his feet, like a servant. He and his friends keep to one side of the house, the bride's family and friends remaining on the other side. The ceremonies, of course, commence as usual with a voracious devouring of raw meat and its accompaniments ; after which, when all have well eaten and drunk, the place is cleared of strangers, and the bride is carried in as on the preceding evening, accompanied by tapers, &c. This time, however, she is covered with a large cloth, held over her like a pall, and, as before, is placed on a stool in front of the principal persons assembled. The bridegroom is then called, and asked if he wishes to marry her ; to which he, of course, replies in the affirmative. They then crook their little fingers together under the cloth ; nay, even sometimes I believe kiss each other : then certain wise admonitions are given to both by a priest, if there should happen to be one present, as well as by the elders in attendance ; and the marriage settlement, or the agreement of what each of them is to bring, is entered upon. Here may be said to be the conclusion of the wedding ceremony—all that follows being as a mere flourish at the end.

Having satisfactorily arranged the business (which is not

always an easy matter), the bridegroom takes his bride, and *sans cérémonie* turns her out, giving her into the charge of his friends outside the door: he then returns, and receives from his father-in-law the wedding presents, which usually consist of a two-edged sword mounted in silver, a gun or two, a rug, some brass utensils, such as a ewer and basin, and other articles of furniture: all these are of course in proportion to the wealth and generosity of the donor.

During the whole of this scene the awkward shyness of Fittick's bridegroom was exceedingly ridiculous, and more especially so when he was called upon to join in the "deball" or war-dance. This dance is performed by men armed with shields and lances, who with bounds, feints, and springs, attack others armed with guns, so as to approach them, and at the same time avoid their fire, while the gunners make similar demonstrations, and at last fire off their guns either in the air or into the earth, and then, drawing their swords, flourish them about as a finish. Our poor hero, being a ploughman, had evidently more notion of whistling his oxen and cracking his whip than of using lances or shields, guns or swords, and had doubtless been getting up a little dexterity for the occasion by taking lessons; for seizing a large matchlock he made two or three passes to and fro, like a bear in a cage, and holding his gun at arm's length with both hands, as if afraid of it, at last fired it off in a hurry, and then, rushing forward to the place where his bride's female friends and relatives had collected, received from each a trifling present,—such as a piece of cotton stuff to make him breeches, a silver ring, or some such trifle; each of which articles he received in both hands, bowing his head. The "arkees," having for a short time danced with their companion the bridegroom, rejoined the bride outside, and returned home in the same order of procession as that which was observed in the morning; the bride being mounted on a mule, with one of the "arkees" seated behind her on the crupper to prevent her falling off. When passing through a village on the road all the women of the place come out and

greet them with their "ly, ly, ly's" of congratulation till they reach home.

Now for the bridesmen. They were made to promise under the cloth, after the man had accepted his bride, that they would faithfully and truly fulfil towards her the part of brethren: wait on her; should she hunger, furnish her with food; or should she thirst, with drink. But they have more than this to do. Three or four of them generally sleep in the same room with the newly-married couple, to furnish them with anything they may require during the night.*

A few days after the wedding, the bridesmen, dressing themselves up in all the ornaments they can collect, take a "cobero" or small drum, and go singing and dancing before every house in the neighbourhood. If in the vicinity of a large town, where there are many visits to make, their peregrinations occupy several days, or even a week or more. Every person they visit is expected to offer a present according to his circumstances. If, however, any one should be stingily disposed, or by ill luck not at home, they forcibly enter the house and purloin anything they can lay hands on; such as sheep, goats, or fowls, which may be straying about the yards. Even in the public market-places and streets they perpetrate the most audacious robberies. Two of them disguised will approach the wares of some seller, while a third, profiting by the concealment afforded him by their long garments, which they purposely leave trailing on the ground, squats behind them. By pretending to bargain for some article or other they generally succeed in drawing off the attention of the vender from his property, who, being seated, naturally raises his eyes while talking to them; and their crouching confederate, watching his opportunity, purloins from beneath whatever he can lay hold of, and then makes quietly off. Nor do they scruple

* They have a variety of other interesting and curious little offices to perform, which it appears are considered as not quite fit to print in English.

most cruelly to victimise even very poor people. Concealed in some nook or corner of one of the most frequented alleys leading to the market, they quietly watch till some country girl passes on her way thither, bearing on her head or shoulder, it may be, a piece of cotton cloth, the produce of some months' industry, when they suddenly spring out and snatch it from her from behind, and dodging round a corner run off as fast as their legs will carry them. In the absence of any other notification of it, you may always know when any great wedding has recently taken place by the lamentations of the women, who run about the streets proclaiming, to the great amusement of the by-standers, how they have been treated. No one attempts forcibly to recover any article stolen from him, as such conduct would be in direct violation of the privileges of the "arkees," who, if questioned concerning a theft they may have perpetrated, do not scruple to assert their innocence with the most solemn oaths. I was once with some "arkees" whom I had seen kill and conceal a sheep, at the same time boasting how and from whom they had stolen it. On discovering the theft the proprietor immediately guessed who were the robbers; but on his coming to them to inquire they positively denied the fact, appealing to St. Michael as witness of their innocence; and on being further pressed, each of them took in his hand the "mateb" or blue cord which he wore round his neck as a sign of Christianity, adding, "as my future abode be in heaven," condemning himself to the other place should he lie. If any one but an "arkee" should thus perjure himself he would not only be considered a wretch unfit to associate with, but be liable to punishment for his crime. The bridesmen are, however, privileged persons, and when in office they may do anything without risking either their skins or their reputation. Notwithstanding, if a man miss anything, he has only to offer a small present as a ransom, and they are obliged in honour to restore the stolen property, whatever it may be: but to obviate this restitution, when any eatable

live stock is stolen, it is immediately slaughtered and devoured, and the poor man goes back empty-handed.

The whole of the profits of these their begging visits and thefts are collected and handed over to the bridegroom to compensate in some measure for the expense he is put to in supplying them with plenty of food and drink for three or four weeks, during the whole of which time they remain in the house, taking it by turns to watch, some of them always remaining near the bride, whom they endeavour to amuse and divert in every imaginable though often in a not describable way, in order that she may not regret too much her temporary separation from her family.

Such are the civil marriages of Abyssinia; and they are by far the most usual. Church marriages are rarely solemnized except between persons who, having first been civilly married, and having afterwards lived happily together till the decline of life, begin to feel that they could not hope to suit themselves better, and so determine to sanctify the marriage by going to church and partaking of the Sacrament. The bond is then considered indissoluble. The civil marriage, on the contrary, may be dissolved on the shortest notice, and for the most trifling reasons. Parties have only to express their wish to separate, and a division of property and children takes place. The boys, if there be any, usually go to the father, and the girls to the mother. This having been done, the parties are at liberty to contract a second marriage as soon as they please. It is not an uncommon thing for a man thus separated from his wife to maintain her in a house near his own, furnish her with the necessary means of subsistence for herself and family, and continue apparently in perfect friendship with her, while at the same time he takes another bride in her place.

CHAPTER XXV.

DEATHS AND FUNERALS.

WHEN a person is dangerously ill and not expected to live, a priest is sent for, who, having heard his confession, absolves him, and administers the last Sacrament. The sick person is reminded that, although he need not consider himself dying, yet it is always well to be prepared for the worst, not only in his spiritual but also in his temporal affairs; and is exhorted to declare his last wishes with regard to the division of his property. These are not written, but simply declared in the presence of the priest and other witnesses. Should the sick man die, his funeral takes place the same day. All the priests from the neighbouring church assemble, and the relations of the deceased call from the house-tops and send messengers to the neighbouring villages, where, standing on eminences, they summon the neighbours by crying aloud, "Such a one, son, or daughter, of such a one, is dead. Come ye to the funeral, and bring the crosses and the incense bowls." The priests on their arrival commence chanting the prayers, while the spectators weep and wail. The body, having been properly washed and laid out, is wrapped in a cotton shroud, with the face covered. It is then placed on a couch, upon which it is to be carried to the burial-place; but before the procession is formed the body is removed to the outside of the door, and, on being again raised on the shoulders of the bearers, every one present who has a gun discharges it as a salute. The funeral train then sets out, the friends of the deceased who accompany it wailing and violently rubbing their foreheads and faces with the borders of their garments

held in both hands. On its way to the church the procession makes seven halts, at each of which incense is burned over the body, and the priests and scribes read and pray. The service comprises the whole of the Psalms, which are read very quickly, a great number of the scribes as well as the priests being present; to each of these is allotted a psalm or two, and they all read their respective parts at the same time. In Abyssinia they have a hundred and fifty-one psalms, the extra one being merely a private history of David's youth, which it would appear we do not allow to be authentic. Besides the Psalms they read certain portions of the New Testament. The seventh halt is made at the church gate. Should, however, the dead person's house be near the church, five of the services are read previous to starting, and only the remaining two on the road. The mourners usually take care to have among their party some friend learned in such matters, to prevent their being cheated out of any part of the reading. The corpse is carried by the friends in turn. On entering the church another long service for the dead is performed, at the conclusion of which the priests wrap the body in a mat made of the leaves of the date-palm, as symbolical of the branches of the palm which were spread before our Saviour on his entering into Jerusalem—death being considered as the entry of the Christian to the spiritual Jerusalem.

Many Abyssinians, during their lifetime, wear round their necks a set of amulets, among which is sometimes one consisting of a strip of parchment nearly six feet long, which is rolled up and fitted into a case of morocco leather. On its whole length is written a legend, illustrated with representations of the Virgin and Saints, which relates that, when the blessed Virgin Mary was in heaven, she remarked that no great people, such as kings, priests, &c.—those, in fact, who when on earth were most esteemed and exalted—obtained admission there. Being grieved at this, she inquired of our LORD, "Who then shall be saved?" And He, for her sake, conceded that all such as prayed through her intercession should obtain salvation. After death these amulets are

unrolled, and laid out along the whole length of the corpse. Amulets, however, are not at all encouraged by the more respectable priests, as they form no part of the religion, but are only catchpennies sold to the superstitious by certain of the "deftersers," or scribes, who, by some are regarded as impostors, and by others as having dealings with the devil.

While the service has been going on in the church the grave has been prepared. In Abyssinia there are no regular grave-diggers, but any one present assists, it being considered a meritorious act of charity to bury the dead. When the grave is ready, the priest descends into it, and perfumes it with incense; the body is then lowered into it. If the deceased be of a wealthy family, masses, with the Sacrament, are performed for his soul daily, for the first forty days after his death; but if his relations be poor, five masses during the same space of time are considered sufficient. These are performed on the third, seventh, twelfth, thirtieth, and fortieth days. For all deceased persons a mass is performed once a year, on the anniversary of the death. The weeping we have described is but of short duration; for the interval between the death and burial is so brief that it would be impossible for the friends and relations of the deceased who live at a distance to assemble for the occasion; so the third day is appointed for the mourning. Early in the morning of that day the relations of the deceased repair to some grassy spot convenient for their friends to meet, and as near the church as possible. At Adoua the market-place is chosen for the purpose. They seat themselves near a couch, on which is laid an artificial figure, to represent a corpse, frequently made of cushions, and covered with a white garment; and the friends as they arrive approach and form a line near it. Those who have guns discharge them in the air, while the rest, bowing their heads forward, remain for a few moments weeping and rubbing their faces on each side with their garments. The nearer relatives of the dead, both male and female, shave their heads on this occasion, and rub themselves so severely on the forehead and temples as to abrade the skin completely, and produce a sore which

takes a long time to cure; and even when healed, the part remains for some time as white as a European's skin. By degrees, however, it assumes a darker colour, and at last becomes even blacker than the rest of the face; but in all cases a mark is apparent for several years, and frequently for life. This custom is almost exclusively confined to the inhabitants of Tigrè and other provinces east of the Taccazy. I have heard that such practices are considered unlawful by the Amhàra people, and consequently but little adopted. Professional singing women frequently attend the funeral meetings of great people, and sometimes get a handsome present as a reward for their services; but many go in the hope of getting well fed at the feasting which takes place after the ceremony. Each person in wailing takes it by turn to improvise some verses in praise of the deceased. For example, a son or daughter will exclaim, "Oh! my father, who fed and clothed me, whom have I now to supply your place!" and other similar expressions; while his friends or relations will call him "Brother," and his wife or servants "Master," each speaking of him according to the degree of relationship which existed between them. The professional singers will give minute details of the history of his ancestry, his deeds, character, and even his property; and this to a great length, thus:—"Oh! Gabrou, son of Welda Mousa, grandson of Ita Garra Raphaël, &c. &c., rider of the bay horse with white feet and of the grey ambling mule, owner of the Damascus barrel-gun ('baaly johar'), and bearer of the silver-mounted shield, why have you left us?" &c.; entering with astonishing readiness into every particular of the deceased's life and actions; while the by-standers at the end of each verse, break in with a chorus of sobbing lamentation, adapted to a mournful chant,—*"Wai! wai! wai! wailayay; wailay, wailayay!"* &c.—which has a pretty plaintive sound, especially when, as is usually the case, a number of soft female voices join in. The "ambilta" and "cundan" keep time with them, and add not a little to the effect. This continues till all the expected friends have arrived and had their fill of wailing; and about noon the

whole party retire to the house, where the cow is killed and a quantity of provision provided for those who have come from a distance. Everything except the cow is usually furnished by the neighbours, as the mourners are supposed to be so overwhelmed with grief as to be unable to attend to such preparations.

The price of the forty days' masses is bargained for by the priests: it usually amounts to from six to twelve dollars, or more, according to the wealth of the family. At certain periods also they expect to be fed by their employers, who on the thirtieth day have to send them, an abundance of provision, including a sheep; on the fortieth day one or two cows, as well as various other things, are prepared for them and the scribes; and on the eightieth day they feast, and at night perform mass. If the family have cash enough in hand, the "teskar," or wake, is held about six months after the funeral; but if, as is often the case, they are short of the "indispensable" for the moment, this ceremony can be postponed to any more convenient time. This is merely a "blow-out" by way of a finish. It is given to the priests and any others who may come; and if it be to the memory of an important personage, it will sometimes last for seven days or more. On the first day the priests come from all the neighbouring churches, sometimes including those of thirty or forty parishes. They all assemble in the church where the person is buried, and have prayers: after which they at once proceed to the feast; but before any one of them can taste a morsel, the "haioh," which is the feeding of the numerous poor who may be congregated outside the gates, must take place. On such occasions these poor people never allow any one to eat till after they have been served. With loud voices they adjure the assembly, for the sake of the SAVIOUR or one of the saints, not to commence eating till they shall have first had their perquisite. A man then counts them, tapping each on the head with a stick; and to every one of them is handed a bit of the entrails, liver, or meat, rolled up in a cake of bread. When all have been served they hold their portions in both hands under

their mouths, and then shout "Hai—oh!" with a long *sostenuto* on the last note. Liberally translated, this would express a prayer for the resurrection of the dead to a new and better life. This part of the ceremony is very important. Few persons would dare to neglect it, or to hazard the maledictions of the assembled poor, by treating their importunities in any way harshly, as such conduct would be a perpetual reproach and a lasting source of annoyance to him who might be guilty of it; for should he, after such behaviour, have the misfortune to quarrel with any acquaintance, or other person to whom the fact was known, he would be immediately accosted with, "Are you not the man who made no hai—oh for his father or relative?"

On the second day the great men of the neighbourhood assemble, and the priests of the church where the deceased was buried are alone invited to meet them. The rank of each day's guests decreases by gradation until the seventh day, which is set aside for the women only. On these, as on all festive occasions in Abyssinia, the convives get excessively intoxicated, and frequent quarrels ensue: nor is this confined to the soldiery or other laymen, but is, I fear, very common among the "defterers" or scribes, and not unfrequent even among the priests. The scribes are indeed a notoriously drunken, noisy set: their song, "Bring drink, and we'll dance for ever," is heard even in the most sacred places, and on the most solemn occasions. Among the poorer class the "teskar" is brought to a conclusion in a shorter time, although they invariably keep it up as long as they can afford to do so. Three "dasses" or booths are sometimes erected: one is kept for the great people and the priests, another for the mixed mob, and a third for the women. Thus the whole affair is finished in one day. This is doing it economically. Others prolong it two or three days. Food is prepared for the priests on every anniversary of the festival.

One thing with reference to burials has yet to be mentioned: there is no doubt that many unfortunate wretches are buried alive in Abyssinia, owing to the extreme igno-

rance of the natives on all subjects connected with medicine, and from the fact that they are never kept above ground more than twelve or fourteen hours after they are supposed to be dead. I have been told that it sometimes happens that during a funeral, noises, as of groans, &c., are heard in the tomb, which are always attributed to the "Booda" or Evil Spirit making off with the body; and no one would think of reopening the grave to examine it. Another piece of folly, of which the Abyssinians are often guilty, is that of ~~coming~~ howling by the bedside of a sick relative. A servant of mine was once dangerously ill, of which, however, I was not aware, no one having intimated to me the extent of his complaint; and as they seemed to prefer doctoring him themselves, I had only inquired after him casually when passing his hut, thinking that little was the matter, till one day I was astounded on hearing the death-wail raised where he was lying. On immediately hastening to see what was the matter, I found that though he was seriously ill he was neither dead nor dying: The effects of a violent fever had rendered his head shaky; and, though not delirious, he was wandering, and when I spoke to him he muttered something, of which the only intelligible word was "death." To afford him momentary relief I had him sponged all over, and gave him some medicine; after which he became a little more sensible, but still continued to speak of his death. I expostulated with his father about the wailing, and on his ordering the women off I went and sat with the lad, and by keeping him cool and easy by sponging, and continuing to talk to him cheerfully, I at last persuaded him that there was nothing seriously the matter. The result was, that he gradually got better; though I firmly believe, that, had the women been allowed to have their way, they would literally have howled him to death.

CHAPTER XXVI.

RELIGION, &c.

CHRISTIANITY is the prevailing religion of Abyssinia, being professed by the majority of the population, as well as by the reigning princes of the different states. There are, nevertheless, scattered through the country, many Mohammedans, and some Falashas, or Jews. The former are mostly descendants of families who adopted that religion in the early times of Islamism, when the Christians of Æthiopia were surrounded and often overpowered by the victorious followers of the false prophet. Some, however, trace their origin from settlers either from the Mussulman Galla, or other neighbouring tribes, or from the Arabs; and some few, again, are men who, having left their country for a time on commercial speculations, or from other motives, have been seduced from the faith of their fathers. Mohammedans are to be found in almost every town of Abyssinia. They are for the most part employed in commerce, the manufacture of cotton cloths, and such like. Few of them are soldiers, they being esteemed by the Christians as cowardly and effeminate.

The Jews of Abyssinia are less numerous than the Mohammedans, and confine themselves principally to certain districts. They retain the ancient religion of the country before the introduction of Christianity.

The Gospel was introduced into Abyssinia by Frumentius, about the year of our Lord 330. Previous to that date it is probable that no attempt had been made towards the conversion of Abyssinia; although by some it is asserted that such an attempt was made by the eunuch of Queen

Candace, whom Philip baptized ; while others pretend that St. Matthew and St. Bartholomew actually visited the country. Some even go so far as to assert that the Virgin Mary herself, with the child Jesus, came into Abyssinia when she fled to Egypt, and show a place in a high mountain which is called her throne or seat.

In matter of profession, no nation is more loudly Christian than the Abyssinians. Bigoted and prejudiced in the extreme, they will not eat meat slaughtered by any one but a Christian. They are extremely superstitious in their belief of miracles and the interposition of the saints, the names of some of whom are continually in their mouths. Their fasts are more numerous perhaps than those of any other Christian people, more than two-thirds of the year being assigned to abstinence. Nor in their fasting do they get off as easily as Roman Catholics ; for it is not sufficient that they should abstain from animal food only ; an Abyssinian, during fast-time, neither eats nor drinks anything till late in the afternoon ; and this, as may be imagined, is a severe mortification of the flesh in a hot and enervating climate. It is true the Mohammedans do nearly the same during their month of Ramadan ; but they only change the day into night, feasting during the night-time on more luxurious food than many of them could allow themselves during the remainder of the year ; while the Abyssinian, when he does eat, confines himself to dried peas, dressed in a sort of bad oil, or to an equally unpalatable dish made of a kind of spinach, called "hamly" or "goummen." This oil is called "kivvy nyhoke," after the plant "nyhoke," from the seeds of which it is extracted. The plant bears an orange flower, and the seeds have some resemblance to linseed. The oil is of a very drying property, almost like varnish, and is not only exceedingly strong and unpleasant to the taste, but also proves to some people so unwholesome, that the Roman Catholic missionaries obtained a dispensation to cook their food in butter on fast-days, some of them having suffered severely from the use of this oil.

Many of the Abyssinian fasts are of long duration. The

time of day when the people may eat is determined by the length of a man's shadow, measured by his own feet, and varies in different fasts. Thus, the fast of Advent is during the last ten days of the month Hedar (October) and the whole of Tahsas (November), and during each day till a man's shadow measure nine and a half feet.

The fast of Gahad, on Epiphany eve, till sunset.

The fast of Jonah, during three days, till the shadow is ten feet.

The fast of Lent, during fifty-five days, till sunset.

The fast of the Apostles varies from ten to forty days, till the shadow is nine feet.

The fast of the Holy Virgin, for sixteen days, till the shadow is nine feet.

In all, taking the fast of the Apostles at forty days, 154 days.

Besides these are the Wednesdays and Fridays, making nearly 260 days of fasting, and doubtless many occasional ones, ordered by the confessor, as penance for some fault committed. During the long fast-time, however, they are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays to eat in the morning, but of course nothing containing animal food.

Some of the priests are very rigorous in keeping all these fasts, and many even voluntarily add a number for their own observance. The people, too, in general are tolerably attentive to this duty; and I have frequently met with men undergoing extreme labour, yet persevering in what they have been brought up to consider as one of the most essential parts of their religion; for, strictly speaking, a man who has been known to neglect the rules of the Church is looked upon almost as an infidel, and, should he die in such a state of disobedience, his body would be refused sepulture in the churches. Good Friday and the following day are passed by the priests and the rigidly devout in an absolute fast of forty-eight hours.

If the Abyssinians fast two-thirds of the year, they make up for it in some degree by the number of feasts which they celebrate. As the traditional and other customs of these

occasions are very singular, and frequently amusing, I will mention a few of the principal ones.

Holy Thursday is a sort of general picnic-day. It is passed entirely out of doors. No one eats bread; but they take Indian corn, millet, dried peas, &c.—in fact, a little of every variety of corn they may possess—and mix them all together. The mixture is then put into a wooden mortar, called “fandouk,” beaten till the skins come off, and then boiled in an earthen pot. The whole proceeding of peeling, cooking, and eating, is performed out of doors, no one entering the house on that day. A portion of the food is put aside till the morrow.

On the morning of Good Friday all the little boys and girls of the neighbourhood go round, and knocking at the door of each house demand food, calling out, “Mishàmisho, mishàmisho! May God give ye cattle in your yard, and children to your bosom: and may those you have already grow up in health and strength.” Every one thus appealed to gives them something; but they make a point of being as grasping and impertinent as they possibly can, each one vying with the other in his endeavours to obtain by importunity as great a variety and quantity of food as possible; and they will not be induced to go away satisfied as long as you will remain and argue with them. Thus, if you give them bread, they thank you, but remark that they cannot eat it dry. You give them a dish of cookery: they ask for pepper, then salt, onions, beer, mead,—in fact, everything they can possibly think of. But as this is done partly as a custom, and partly for the sake of amusing themselves at your expense, the best plan you can adopt is to enter your house and shut the door. After they have gone their rounds they take the collected food, and, retiring to some snug corner in the country, eat, and amuse themselves, much after the manner of English people at a picnic party. But woe to the man who dares refuse to treat them according to their perquisite on this their own privileged day. Should any one have behaved stingily, they make a sham corpse of a bundle of clothes, and, placing it on a couch, carry it in

procession through the town; part of the boys dressed up as priests, and the remainder of the troop following as mourners. As they go along, imitating in every point a real funeral, they wail and cry out "Wai, wai, wai! Mr. Such-a-one, son of Mr. So-and-So, is dead. Alas, the great, the good, the generous man!"—and so on; and when they are tired of walking about they go and make a grave near some of the most frequented thoroughfares in the place, and, sitting round it, lament in like manner; and the passers-by are of course mightily amused at the sport thus made of their stingy neighbour; and the news, being told all over the place, becomes a sore subject to the object of it.

On the anniversary of one of their Abyssinian saints, called Gabro Menfus Kouddos (slave of the Holy Spirit), everybody eats vetch peas, which have been made to sprout by soaking them for three days in water. Portions of these peas are sent about as presents among friends and neighbours. I never could satisfy myself as to the origin of this custom. Some people have told me that the sprouts represented the saint's beard, which was white and very long;—others, that they merely referred to his having passed the greater portion of his life in the woods, when he lived on roots and berries in every stage of vegetation.

On the morning of St. John's day a number of people, your servants or friends, present to you a bunch of wild flowers, at the same time saying, "Inkoutatash" (Take this present): the word, however, is not used on presenting any other sort of gift. This day is regarded in Abyssinia much as our New Year's day. It is about the time when Nature seems to burst anew into life. The rainy season being over, the corn is springing up, the trees are in bloom; even the birds are decked out in their brightest plumage, which, as the season advance, they lose, and recover only with the rains. Thus, the little scarlet and black cardinals, which in this spring-time of Abyssinia, and in the succeeding months of corn-time and harvest, are to be seen everywhere hovering like little balls of fire over the millet-fields, in winter drop their brilliant colours, and assume a more quiet

costume, nearly resembling that of our common English sparrow.

The nosegay presented on St. John's day is a sort of offering of the first fruits, to remind the receiver of the beautiful season that is setting in. In Abyssinia the bearer of good news is always rewarded with a gift; and this token of the new year, being considered as such, generally elicits a gift in return. Among equals, every one strives to rise earliest in the morning, and to be the first to offer his bouquet to his friend, who then has to give him a present according to his means. Inferiors also give flowers to their superiors; and in a great man's house there is a good deal of rivalry among the servants as to who shall be the first to wish him many happy returns of the day, for only the two or three earliest comers are usually rewarded. Ladies generally prepare a new pair of breeches for their husbands, spun with their own hands, which they offer when he presents his nosegay; while he in return gives them a new dress. So the master with his inexpressibles, the mistress with her calico shirts, and the servants with their presents, are all joyous: in fact, all the house is happy; and with a few exceptions, such as where there is sickness, much innocent pleasure and gaiety are I believe enjoyed by all classes in this country on the anniversary of Kouddos Yohannes.

But not only is it celebrated as a day of festivity and merry-making; the friends of persons possessed of the devil—(which malady will be described hereafter under its various denominations of *bouda* and *tigritiya*), who have tried all the usual remedies without the sufferer's being benefited by them—await the arrival of this anniversary, as their last and most likely chance of success. The patient is taken into the country and placed at a point where two roads cross each other; then, according as they may have received instructions from the wise, a white or a red sheep is dragged three times round him, and afterwards slaughtered "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The sign of the cross is then marked on the patient's forehead with the blood of the victim, which is left where it was killed,

and the whole party returns homeward, being careful on no account to look back towards the sheep, lest by so doing they should disturb the devil, who is supposed to have left the man, and to be busy eating the mutton.

But more than this, St. John's is the only cleanly day in the calendar; for in the evening the whole population, male and female, old and young, go down to the neighbouring stream and bathe. It is a fact that, excepting on this occasion, there are many of the number who, beyond washing their hands before and after meals, and their feet after a journey, never trouble the water from one year's end to another. My habit of washing every day in the European fashion gave rise to much scandal on my first arrival; and it was constantly inquired, "Is he a Mussulman, that he thus washes, and so often?" Of a truth, Christianity is but a dirty religion in Abyssinia.

As we have already stated while speaking of the fasts, the day before the Epiphany is passed by the priests and other devout men in abstinence until sunset. During the afternoon the Holy Sacrament is administered to the priests only, in their churches. After the conclusion of the ceremony they form in procession, and, accompanied by the defterers or scribes, and bearing with them all the church paraphernalia, go down to the neighbouring rivulet. Tents are pitched near its banks, ready to receive them, and there is a store of comestibles of every variety, with, of course, the usual large proportion of beer and honey-mead; the whole of which good things are from the voluntary contributions of the devout of the parish.

When the much-wished-for sunset has arrived the feasting begins, and it is fearful to behold with what vigour the half-famished divines set to work. There is abundance for them; for the food being begged as a supply for the ark, or tabôte, the superstitious people think that they are doing a very godly act in providing vast quantities, while in reality the only result is, that the priests make beasts of themselves. The whole night is often passed in alternate prayer, singing, dancing, and drinking. The songs and dance are both of a

religious kind : the latter, probably taken from the religious dancing of the Israelites, frequently mentioned in the Bible, is merely a peculiar sort of shrugging of the body and stamping with the feet. The end of these devotional orgies is the administration of the Sacrament before sunrise ; but it not unfrequently happens that long before that time many of the priests are not in a very fit state to partake of it, disgraceful scenes of drunkenness often disturbing these religious festivals. During the evening of *timkàt*, or the Epiphany, that I passed at *Adoua* several of the holy priests were found to have tumbled into the neighbouring brook, *Assam*, overcome, as charitably-disposed persons may have said, by their religious fervour ; though some sinful scoffers—myself included, I fear—suggested that liquor might have been the cause of their overthrow.

After the Sacrament has been distributed among the priests, the chief priest, raising his hands over the stream, blesses it, and then the people bathe in it. Great men, however, and priests, are sprinkled, to obviate the necessity of their mixing, even in such a ceremony, with the vulgar herd. After this the women dance and sing, and the men engage in various sports ; those who are mounted playing at "*goux*," which is a sort of tournament, like the Turkish *jerrid* play, wherein the warriors engaged ride after each other, throwing staves and warding off blows in mimic fight ; now pursuing, now retreating. It is a lively and very exciting pastime ; and I wonder that something of the kind has never been introduced into our sport-loving and horse-fancying country, to make up for the loss of the lists and other equestrian exercises.

While the horsemen are thus engaged, the pedestrians, divided by parishes, play at "*hocky*," in precisely the same manner as we do in England. At *Adoua* the goals are the churches of St. Michael and St. Gabriel, past which each party strives to drive the ball. They play with clubs with large heads and a wooden ball. When the game is ended the victorious party dance, and sing a sort of war-chant, "*Aho, aho, ahai, ahai, ahai.*"

All these scenes are very wild and interesting. I know nothing more agreeable than to see a large number of savages engaged in their sports or dances. The more thoroughly savage the actors are, the more diverting the scene, from the characteristic wildness of their gestures. Some of the dances of the slave countries are worth all the Giselles and Sylphides that ever appeared on the boards of an opera-house.

Their sports terminated, each parish follows its respective priests, who proceed to their church, carrying with them the ark with the ten commandments and the Host. The ark is borne on the head of a priest, shaded by a canopy carried tentwise over it, and so sacred is it considered that no ordinary person may approach it, much less touch it. The holy utensils being deposited in the churches, the people retire to their houses, and pass the remainder of the day in feasting and merrymaking.

The following day is the celebration of the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and also of the feast of St. Michael the Archangel. This day is looked upon by the Abyssinians as one of the greatest of all their festivals, from the importance of their patron saint. In the churches the greatest ceremonies are performed, and there is feasting in the houses of the wealthy. Some little is, indeed, done by every one, whether poor or rich, as in Abyssinia all classes are delighted at the excuse afforded them by holy feast-days of making for themselves a day of jollification, and too often of excess and debauchery. The priests, too, are by no means unwilling that the observance of these holydays should be strictly attended to, because on all these occasions they are well fed by their devout parishioners.

Many of the people make vows to their respective patron saint, to slaughter on his anniversary a bullock, sheep, or other votive offering, in order to conciliate his protection and favour for the remainder of the year. Each family has its patron saint, whose anniversary is handed down from father to son as the family jubilee. On this day the different members of the family do their best to entertain their friends by some sort of merrymaking, every man according to his means.

Even servants consider it necessary, in some manner, to celebrate among themselves the holyday of their forefathers. St. Michael is much in vogue as a patron. Besides him are the Virgin, St. John the Baptist, Tekla Haimanout, Gabro Menfos Kouddos, and others.

A few days after St. Michael's is the anniversary of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin. The priests congregate in the churches dedicated to her, and celebratè the event by some prayer and much feasting.

Liddet, or Christmas-day, is, as in every Christian country, a great jubilee; but its observance in Abyssinia is marked by nothing beyond the usual amount of praying, singing, dancing, and feasting.

Of all their feasts, that of Mascal, or the Cross, is the one which is celebrated with the greatest amount of pomp and outward show. During the whole of the interval between St. John's day and this feast a desultory warfare is carried on between the young people of the opposite sexes in the towns. They all sally out in the evenings, the girls armed with gourds containing a filthy solution of every sort of abomination they can pick up, which they carry concealed under their clothes; while the lads are provided with nettles or thistles as weapons of offence. When any of the hostile parties meet, the contest commences by the members of each sex insulting those of the other with the most obscene and offensive language. In this warfare the female tongue, as in all countries, has, of course, the advantage. Then the boys attack the girls, nettling them about their naked breasts and shoulders, while the fair ones retaliate by discharging portions of their odoriferous compound in the faces of their assailants.

The evening before Mascal the ceremonies commence by a discharge of fire-arms, at sunset, from all the principal houses. Then every one provides himself with a torch, and during the early part of the night bonfires are kindled, and the people parade the town, carrying their lighted torches in their hands. They go through their houses, too, poking a light into every dark corner in the hall, under the couches,

in the stables, kitchen, &c., as if looking for something lost, and calling out, "Akho, akhoky ! turn out the spinage, and bring in the porridge ; Mascal is come !" The meaning of the first two words is not very intelligible, and consequently does not admit of a literal explanation ; but I should liberally translate it, "Awake from idleness ! (or darkness)." After this they play, and poke fun and torches at each other.

At Adoua the different parishes have a regular fight, which put me strongly in mind of a Cambridge "town and gown" row. On the Mascal eve that I passed there, the united parishes of St. Michael and St. Gabriel, after a long contest, beat and put to flight the men of St. Saviour's, or Medhainy Allem. I was of the retreating party ; for though I belonged to the Mussulman quarter, the losing parish was nearest to me. The row usually begins among the boys, and continues till some man, seeing his sons hurt or in danger, goes to their rescue, when others of the opposite party join in against him, and so the fight becomes general. Beyond a few roughish club knocks, it is rarely that any serious consequences occur.

Early in the morning, while it is yet dark, great men have piles of wood erected on the high places near the towns, and set on fire. Then one or two oxen or sheep, according to the wealth of the offerer, are taken, and after having been led three times round the bonfire are slaughtered, and their flesh is left on the spot till it is devoured by birds of prey, hyænas, and jackals. In this, and many other of the Abyssinian customs, may be seen traces of the ancient heathen sacrifices, altars on high places, &c.

The people all rise early to see the fires ; and the Mascal rising sun finds the whole Abyssinian population wide awake. In the houses of chieftains the soldiers and followers present themselves before their master, and go through the "dum-fater," or war-boast, narrating how they have served him, and how they will do so again when opportunity offers, and receiving from him either gifts, promises, or bare acknowledgments, according to his generosity, or the reality of their merits in his estimation. A similar scene takes place on a

grander scale at the Royal camp, whither the chiefs of provinces and districts repair on this day, to pay their respects to the prince, and to present to him their annual gifts. On this day every house that can possibly afford it slaughters a cow; or, if it cannot compass such a luxury, a sheep: but even the former is by no means so great a thing as it would sound to English ears; for in Abyssinia a fat cow is worth at most only from 8*s.* to 12*s.* 6*d.*

I always made a point of entering into the spirit of the people on these occasions, and I believe gained many friends by so doing. When at Adoua, I gave a small entertainment to the soldiers and others of my acquaintance. It might have been called a breakfast, for, at the suggestion of some of my "intimes," I issued my cards for an early hour, in order that my guests might be able to arrange their time, as they would all probably wish to go to three or four other parties before the evening. Accordingly, I expected that they would come, and merely go through a form of feeding, as a compliment, reserving their appetites for later onslaughts; and I must own that my rather savage feelings of hospitality were piqued at the idea of their leaving me without being well filled. But truly I was agreeably disappointed; for a fine fat cow, two large sheep, and many gallons of mead, with a proportionate quantity of bread, disappeared like smoke before the twelve or fourteen guests, leaving only a few pickings for the servants.

After breaking up at my house, the party proceeded to different feasting places, in peace, though not all so sober as might have been wished: and as, during that day, I also was a guest as well as a host, I had an opportunity of remarking, to my astonishment, that there were but very few of them who did not seem to recover entirely, for each new attack, any loss of appetite they might have sustained in the former onsets. I have said that they retired from my house in peace, and have made this observation because it is not always the case. The parties almost invariably getting more or less elevated on such occasions, drunken quarrels, sometimes leading to serious consequences, and even fatal ones,

are unfortunately but too frequent, especially among soldiers at the tables of great chiefs. On the very day I am speaking of, Oubi had to order the death of two men who had killed two of their companions in a quarrel at table. Vanity is one of the principal besetting sins of the Abyssinians ; and it is to this weakness, when brought out by liquor, that the origin of most of these quarrels may be traced.

I remember more than once to have heard a remark something like the following made by one of two men who, from being very dear friends, had chosen to sit next to each other at table : " You're a very good fellow, and my very dear friend ; but (hiccup) you are n't half so brave or handsome as I am ! " The " very dear friend " denies the fact, in a tone of voice denoting anything but amity, and states that his opinion is exactly the reverse. The parties warm in the argument ; words, as is usual when men are in such a state, are bandied about with any measure, and often without much meaning : insults follow ; then blows ; and if the parties round them be in a similar condition to themselves, and do not immediately separate them, it frequently happens that swords are drawn. Dangerous wounds or death are the consequence ; or, as is not uncommon, others of the party, siding with the quarrellers, probably with the idea of settling the affair, are induced to join in the row, which in the end becomes a general engagement. I have noticed this trait of vanity, as exhibiting itself in various ways in a drunken Abyssinian. I always found that the best plan for keeping a man quiet, when in this state, was to remark to him that it was unbecoming in a great man to behave in such a way—that people of rank were dignified and reserved in their manners and conversation. And thus I have argued very successfully with my own servants, on more than one occasion, flattering them while they were tipsy, and then paying them off with a five-foot male bamboo when they got sober again.

I recollect one fellow who was privileged, for he had asked my leave to go to a party and get drunk. On returning home in the evening, he staggered into my room in as dig-

nified a manner as he could, and, seating[•] himself beside me on my couch, embraced me, and with tears in his eyes made me a thousand protestations of attachment and affection, offering to serve me in any way he could, but never by a single expression evincing that he considered me as other than a dear friend, and that indeed in a rather patronizing fashion, although the same fellow was in the habit of washing my feet, and kissing them afterwards,* every evening, and would, if sober, have no more thought of seating himself, even on the ground, in my presence, than of jumping over the moon. With his fellow-servants too he acted similarly; for though he knew them all, and their characters and positions, he addressed them as his servants, ordering them about, and upbraiding them for sundry peccadilloes, which they had doubtless committed, and which thus came to my knowledge. In fact, in every point he acted to perfection the manners and language of a great man; and so often have I seen the same mimicry, that it has led me to believe that the chief mental employment of the lowest fellow in the country is building castles in the air, and practising to himself how he would act, and what he would say, if he were a great man.

There is a feast called "Kadam Souaur," or "left Saturday," as that day was formerly the Jewish Sabbath, but given up by the Christians for the Sunday at the time of the resurrection of our Saviour. The priests collect a quantity of rushes, and bless them in the church; and then a priest and a deacon[•] take them out into the parish, the deacon carrying the bundle, and the priest distributing the rushes to all passers-by, binding them on the head of the receiver. They also visit all the houses with them, and generally receive a handsome present.

Thus much for the fasts and feasts observed in the Christian Church of Æthiopia. As for their religion, they are, as I have before hinted, Christian rather in profession

* An Abyssinian servant, after washing his master's feet, dries them on his own garment, and then, still kneeling before him, raises one foot in both hands and kisses it.

than in practice, many of their observances being clearly Jewish. Their very churches, which are in many parts extremely numerous, remind one of the altars and temples spoken of in the Old Testament, not only from their being mostly built on high places, and surrounded by groves, but also from their internal construction. In general—that is, with the exception of a few square ones, chiefly built by strangers—as, for example, that of Axum—the churches of Abyssinia are circular, and in their external appearance differ only from the better class of country huts from their being rather more regularly fashioned, somewhat ornamented, and further distinguished by a rude cross of iron, and occasionally even of silver gilt, on the apex of their thatched conical roofs. A bell is generally placed in a neighbouring hut, or rather the substitute for a bell, real ones being seldom met with in the country. This makeshift is a peculiar kind of stone, which, when struck, produces a sound nearly resembling that of the bell of a small village church in Rutland, of which I remember having heard it said, that, when ringing for church, it had sometimes occurred to strangers visiting the place on a Sunday that the people were a very Sabbath-breaking set, as the blacksmith was working away as usual.

The interior of an Abyssinian church is divided into three compartments—a circular wall, concentric with the outer one, dividing the first passage for the laity from the place of the priests; while in the centre of all is a small square, or I believe sometimes circular place, called “Kadasta Kadastan,” or Holy of Holies. Thus you have the court of the Levites, that of the priests, and the Holy of Holies, exactly after the manner of a Jewish temple. Under the exterior circle are vaults, wherein mostly great men are buried, while the exterior face of the wall which separates the place from that of the priests is adorned with the rudest possible attempts at painting. Figures of the saints, their faces always in full, whatever position their bodies may be in, are daubed in ochre, raddle, and whiting. St. George, mounted on a very chalky-looking steed, is killing something

called a dragon ; while at the same time his face is turned exactly in an opposite direction to that in which he is pointing his weapon.

The Sanctum Sanctorum is the receptacle of the ark, an object of the profoundest veneration, and again of evident Jewish origin. Over this hangs its canopy of silk or chintz, and a vast number of trumpery pieces of similar material hang about in different directions among crosses, books, &c. By right, I believe, no one but priests can enter this holy place ; but I have been admitted to it on more than one occasion,—partly from being esteemed a man of letters ; partly because as a countryman of the Patriarch's (all whites are considered Copts), I must be, if possible, better than a priest ; partly because the reputation I enjoyed for morality put the chance of my being unclean out of the question ; and doubtless still more than all, because the good monk who may have been thus unscrupulous in admitting me had the hopes of filthy lucre as an ease to his conscience.

This very cleanness or uncleanness is again purely Mosaic. A man who is, for certain reasons, unclean cannot enter the church till he is purified. Among other causes of uncleanness, to have entered a room where a child has been recently born is, as I have already stated, sufficient to render one unclean ; to have touched polluted garments is another cause ; and many more might be named, but that they are mostly to be found in the book of Jewish law. Circumcision is practised amongst them ; and in their matters of eating they follow most strictly the dictates of Moses.

Most Abyssinians refuse to eat the flesh of the wild boar, though some partake of it ; but the camel is to all an object of horror. Following to the letter the commands of Moses, they refuse to eat animals which do not chew the cud, and those which have not cloven hoofs. Thus the hare is considered as disgusting. The generality of the people, however, do not know whence these rules are derived, but merely believe that such food is not proper, or even wholesome. I remember one man whom I brought with me into

the Mussulman country made objections on being offered camel's meat. "Am I a Mussulman?" said he. "No," I replied, "nor am I either;" at the same time putting into my mouth a huge piece of fat and an onion. The poor fellow, though hungry, resisted. After fasting, however, two or three times, or rather eating "maigre" when we could get no other meat, and influenced by my very good example, he gave up his prejudices, and was soon as fond of the camel-meat as I was. I then had a good laugh at him, telling him that at least a dozen times before he had eaten the same kind of meat, mistaking it for goat's flesh, and had also twice as often drunk of the milk of the unclean beast. He at last got very philosophical, like most of his countrymen, who, after a few days' residence in a strange land, often drop altogether, not only their prejudices, but even their Christianity. I have met men in Abyssinia who would, according to their own account, rather die than swerve from their principles; and yet I have afterwards seen the same men eating Mussulman meat, and enjoying themselves on the forbidden, just as if they had been born and brought up to it. Nay more; I have known instances of their turning Turk for the time of their sojourn in the land of Islam, and returning to their Christianity and bigotry as soon as they set foot in their own country. I remember one man especially who turned Mussulman for the sake of 150 piastres (1*l.* 10*s.*) and a new garment; and I have heard of others who, on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, became Mussulmans for the road thither and back again; while at the Holy City and on their return to Abyssinia they put on their Christianity. These latter cases are, however, I should hope, rare; but still the truth must be told; and it is a fact that the Abyssinian is not usually difficult in matters of religion, except at home. And as for the converts that missionaries may boast of having made, they are, in nine cases out of ten, only converts to calico and Maria Theresa dollars. One or two, of whom that very worthy man, Samuel Gobat, now Bishop of Jerusalem, seemed to hope good things, were

the very men on whom the Lazarists founded their highest expectations, and on whose sincerity they placed the greatest confidence, only a very short time after.

But to return to what we were talking about. My Abyssinian, after a short residence, lost all his prejudices, and soon learnt my favourite Arabic proverb, "Eh! we have eaten of the clean and of the unclean, like the Baràbra." Now, the origin of this saying is as follows:—A Berberi* had tied a sheep in his hut, and had gone out, closing the door after him. By some accident the hut took fire, and the poor sheep was roasted alive. The Berberi was puzzled as to whether he might eat of the sheep or no. His conscience told him that all meat not properly slaughtered was forbidden; but the smell of the roast was very tempting: "so," said he, "I am not certain whether this meat be clean or unclean, that's a fact. If I sin, it is therefore from ignorance; and hence no sin." So he ate of the meat, and then walked off to the fakki. "Master," said he, "if a sheep be burnt alive, is it clean or unclean?" "Decidedly unclean," replied the fakki. "Eh!" said the Berberi, as he went away in a state of the most philosophical tranquillity, "then I have eaten of the clean and of the unclean."

Some of the Abyssinians hold family prejudices against certain clean animals, for which they can assign no reason whatever, except that, like the children of Jonadab the son of Rechab, their forefathers had forbidden their use as food. Others again, for the same reason, will on no account partake of certain parts of any animal. Thus, I have known several persons who would never taste either tongue or heart, purely because some ancestor of theirs had made a vow on the subject. One of the antelope tribe, called Medauqua, is by some considered unclean, for it is said to feed upon dead men; and I was told that, on one occasion, parts of a human finger and a ring were found in the stomach

* Natives of the provinces about Dongola, Berber, &c., are so called. They are often very erroneously supposed to be stupid, and many sayings and *bulls* are fathered on them by the Sennaris and Arabs.

of one of these animals. I have heard the same nonsensical story told of the hare.

As for the animals which they *will* eat, these too must be killed after a rule; the animal being thrown down, his head turned towards Jerusalem, and the words "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" pronounced while the throat is being cut.

I have stated how, on St. John's day, a sheep is led round those who are afflicted with the devil, &c. Similarly on other occasions the friends of a sick man will hope that, by carrying an animal round the patient's bed three times, and then killing it, or even dashing an egg on the ground after having passed it round his head, they may benefit the sufferer; the animal thus offered being made to take the man's punishment, and make atonement for him. This, again, is quite similar to a Jewish sacrifice, although the Abyssinians would be very loth to admit that it was so.

So much for the resemblance which many of their customs bear to those of the Jews; though there are many more, which at this moment I have forgotten.

Under the head of "Ceremonies" I have already mentioned what takes place at birth, baptisms, marriages, &c. The ordination of priests and deacons is, I believe, tolerably simple; for instance, I have been told that, on the arrival of the present Aboun from Egypt, the candidates, who are only required to be able to read a little, were collected in a mass near the place where he was. The bishop then went through some ceremony, and ended by pronouncing a blessing, and blowing in the direction of the assembled crowd, who were thus all ordained. Among these was a woman with her child in arms, who had come thither from motives of curiosity. She, too, was of course ordained; but I don't remember hearing that she ever officiated. If a priest be married previous to his ordination, he is allowed to remain so; but no one can marry after having entered the priesthood.

Some, but not all, of the Abyssinians believe in the tran-

substantiation of the sacramental bread and wine, and assert that the actual body and blood of our Saviour are partaken of by the faithful, but that an angel takes them away from an unbeliever, and restores the bread and wine, in his hands, to their natural state, such as they were previous to the benediction. The wine is merely an infusion of dried raisins.

Simony is but too common in this country ; and although fasting is mostly the penance inflicted by the Church, some more *profitable* punishment is usually added to it.

Theological disputes, especially on the natures and unction of Christ, have split Christianity into violent schisms ; but as Bishop Gobat probably investigated these matters far more carefully than I did, and doubtless became thoroughly acquainted with them, I cannot do better than quote what he says on the subject :—

“ The Christians of Abyssinia are at present divided into three parties, so inimical to each other, that they curse one another, and will no longer partake of the Sacrament together. It is one single point of theology that disunites them ; but I have so much enlarged upon it in my Journal, that I need only mention it here : it is the unceasing dispute concerning the unction of Jesus Christ. One party is of opinion that, when it is said that Jesus Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit, it is meant that the Godhead was united with the human nature of Jesus Christ ; and that, in all the passages of the Bible where the Holy Spirit is represented as having been given to Jesus Christ, the name Holy Spirit only signifies the divinity of Christ, who had no need of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, whom He could not receive, having always possessed Him. Their manner of expressing themselves is, that Jesus Christ *has* anointed ; that He *has been* anointed ; and that He himself *is* the unction. This party is chiefly in Tigre—the most exasperated one. Their doctrine was that of the last Coptic Abuna. The second opinion is, that, when it is said that Jesus Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit, it is signified merely that the Holy Spirit accomplished the union of the Godhead with

the human nature in the person of Christ. This party is principally to be found in the provinces of Godjam and Lasta. The third opinion, predominating in all the other provinces of Abyssinia, even in Shoa, is, that Jesus Christ, as man, although united to the Godhead from the moment of His conception, received the Holy Ghost in the human part of His nature, in the same manner as we receive Him—viz., as a gift of the Father—in order that He might be enabled to accomplish, as man, the work of our redemption: whence they conclude that, because Jesus Christ received the Holy Spirit as we receive Him, His unction is to be called a third birth. These are the most tolerant. I have understood that, after my departure from Gondar, some of the most learned men left off calling the unction of Jesus Christ a birth. It appears that these differences of opinion are founded upon the different views they have adopted of the two natures of Jesus Christ; although, according to the letter, they are all Monosophytes. They hold, as all the other sects of the East do, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only. If we except the differences of opinion concerning the unction of Jesus Christ, they all have nearly the same superstition."

The reverence in which the saints are held by the Abyssinians is of a piece with the rest of their religion, as it denotes extreme bigotry, combined with lamentable ignorance. In many cases the patron saint is preferred to the Almighty; and a man who would not hesitate to invoke the name of his Maker in witness to a falsehood, would have difficulty in disguising his perjury if he were appealed to in the name of St. Michael or St. George. It is also a well-known fact, and most common of occurrence, that a favour besought in the name of God would often be refused, while, if the request were immediately after repeated in the name of the Virgin, or of some favourite saint, it would probably be granted. This may be observed in the appeal of the common street beggar in Tigre, whose ordinary cry is, "Silla Izgyheyr! Silla Medhainy Allam!" (For the sake of God! For the sake of the Saviour!)—while, if he be

very importunate, he will change his usual whining tone, and add with persuasive emphasis, "Silla Mariam! Silla Abouna Tekla Haimanout!" (For the sake of Mary! For the sake of Saint Tekla Haimanout!)

There are numberless saints; and their lives, no doubt written originally by some clever romancers, are copied by the scribes, and sold to the devout. Most of them are rather long stories, and all very ridiculous ones. I will, however, abridge one or two of the most wonderful, and relate them for the amusement of the marvel-loving part of my readers:—

Gabro Menfus Kouddos (Slave of the Holy Ghost) was a great saint from his birth; nay, more—he was born a saint. No sooner did he enter the world than he stood up, and three days after his birth he bowed his head thrice, saying, in a distinct voice, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." He never tasted of his mother's milk, nor during the whole period of his life partook of food or drink of any sort. Once, when praying on a mountain, he fell over a precipice, two hundred cubits deep. Two angels immediately joined their spread wings under him to support him; but he refused their assistance, saying that he trusted to God alone for help. Another time he was ascending a very high mountain, and, being fatigued, the Holy Trinity came and assisted him. Many other equally absurd and almost blasphemous stories are related of him; at last, after a very long life, I forget of how many years, the Almighty sent Azrael, the angel of death, to take him. But the saint refused to die, saying, that, as he had neither eaten nor drunk, he could not die. So all the saints came to him in turn for the purpose of persuading him to leave earth for Paradise. St. John the Baptist first addressed him, saying that he had gone the way of all flesh, notwithstanding his many privations and sufferings. Gabro Menfus Kouddos, however, at once met him with the answer—"Yes; but *you* could not fast even for forty days, but fed on locusts and wild honey." Thus he replied to all the saints, and at last even to the Virgin and our Saviour. Still, however, the

decrees of the Omnipotent must be obeyed, and his life was taken from him; but then there was a dispute among the elements as to what was to become of his body. The earth refused to receive it, as he had never partaken of her produce. A similar refusal was made by the water, for he had never taken a drop within his lips. The fire had also equally strong objections. So the saint was restored to life, and taken up alive into heaven. His tomb is, however, shown at Zoukwahla in Shoa; but it is said to contain only one of his ribs, which, at the time of his ascent to heaven, he took out and left on earth as a memento for his followers.

There is another saint,—I think Tekla Haimanout,—whose whole life and actions are an exact copy of those of our Saviour; even to the fact of his father being a carpenter, named Joseph, and his mother bearing the name of Mary.

Abouna Aragawy was one of the nine missionaries sent to Abyssinia by St. Athanasius. His doctrine and the miracles which he wrought gained for him many followers; but from some of the unbelieving he suffered persecution. This is the account given by some historians; while others assert that, overcome by his popularity, he sought retirement from this world, in order to devote the remainder of his days to religious duty. Be it as it may, he came to the rock on which is now the celebrated monastery of Devra Dàmo. After walking several times round it, without finding any means of access to its summit, he prayed to the Almighty, who sent him an enormous boa-constrictor, which offered to carry him up in its mouth; but he said, "I fear your mouth: turn round, and let me take your tail." So the snake did as he was desired; and the saint, holding fast by its tail, was drawn up to the summit of the rock in perfect safety. The snake, having performed its duty, offered to leave the saint if he wished it; but Aragawy begged that it would remain, making, however, the condition of its not alarming or destroying any of his disciples who might come to visit him. They then took possession of the caves and holes which are in the mountain, where they are by many supposed to be still living. Some, how-

ever, pretend that the snake is dead ; but no one is so wanting in faith as for a moment to deny that the saint yet lives there, and will continue to live till the day of judgment. No curious person, however, dares to venture into the cave. The monks will not allow lights to be taken in ; and the people assert that a spirit which protects the place will not permit any one who enters to come out alive. Probably there is a pit or chasm into which some one may have fallen in former times, and which has given rise to this superstition.

When I first went to Rohabaita it was reported that an immense snake had some years before been killed there by a hunter. The man was severely reproached by the priests, who said that the snake was the guardian angel of the place. It was reported to have been 27 cubits, or 40 feet, in length, and was probably of the boa tribe.

CHAPTER XXVII.

*SUPERSTITIONS RELATING TO PERSONS POSSESSED
OF THE DEVIL.*

THE Abyssinians in general believe that the devil is allowed considerable power over mankind, not only in tempting them to sin, but also in annoying them grievously by possessing them, after the manner in which persons were possessed in the ancient times of the Jews. This is my notion of the matter; though they themselves do not altogether give the devil his due, calling his handiwork that of the "Bouda" in some cases, and of "Tigritiya" in others, according to the symptoms of the patient. It will be a rather long task to explain the workings of these malignant spirits, their natures and origin, and the mode of their expulsion; but as such relations are interesting to many, I shall at once begin with the Bouda, being more intimately acquainted with him than the other, from having seen above a hundred cases of his work, and only a few of Tigritiya.

In Abyssinia the trade of blacksmith is hereditary, and considered as more or less disgraceful, from the fact that blacksmiths are, with very rare exceptions, believed to be all sorcerers, and are opprobriously called "Bouda." They are supposed to have the power of turning themselves into hyænas, and sometimes into other animals. I remember a story of some little girls who, having been out in the forest to gather sticks, came running back breathless with fright; and on being asked what was the cause, they answered that a blacksmith of the neighbourhood had met them, and, entering into conversation with him, they at

length began to joke him about whether, as had been asserted, he could really turn himself into a hyæna. The man, they declared, made no reply, but taking some ashes, which he had with him, tied up in the corner of his cloth, sprinkled them over his shoulders, and to their horror and alarm they began almost immediately to perceive that the metamorphosis was actually taking place, and that the blacksmith's skin was assuming the hair and colour of the hyæna, while his limbs and head took the shape of that animal. When the change was complete he grinned and laughed at them, and then retired into the neighbouring thickets. They had remained, as it were, rooted to the place from sheer fright; but the moment the hideous creature withdrew they made the best of their way home.

Few people will venture to molest or offend a blacksmith, fearing the effects of his resentment. The greater part of the "possessed" are women; and the reason of their being attacked is often that they have despised the proffered love of some Bouda, or for other similar cause. Men however are by no means exempt; and of this I have seen several instances.

It is a custom in Abyssinia to conceal the real name by which a person is baptized, and to call him only by a sort of nickname, which his mother gives him on leaving the church. The baptismal names in Abyssinia are those of saints; such as Son of St. George, Slave of the Virgin, Daughter of Moses, &c. Those given by the mother are generally expressive of maternal vanity regarding the appearance or anticipated merits of her child. They are such as gold, silver, joy, sweetness, &c. The reason for this concealment of the Christian name is, that the Bouda cannot act upon a person whose real name he does not know. Should he, however, have obtained the true name of his victim, he takes a particular kind of straw, and, muttering something over it, bends it into a circle, and places it under a stone. The person thus doomed is taken ill at the very moment of the bending of the straw; and should

it by accident snap under the operation, the result of the attack will be that the patient will die.

This malady and the Tigritiya are no doubt often purposely counterfeited by servant-maids to evade their work, or by others to excite pity, attract attention, and get themselves pulled about by the men. Still, as many real cases, wherein the symptoms have been as absurd as in the false ones, have terminated in death, one is led to inquire whether the patient's mind could have been affected, and whether, from having frequently seen similar farces acted, the parties have not in their delusion acted likewise. I had better cite a few instances of my own experience to bear on both sides of the question, and leave my readers to form their own opinion.

The first case which I ever saw, and which I consequently watched very attentively and noted down, was that of a servant-woman at Rohabaita. The first day she complained of general languor, and of a stupid heavy feeling about the head. Towards evening this seemed to increase, when she cried a little, but was perfectly reasonable, and excused herself by saying that it was only because she felt low and melancholy. An hour after this, however, she burst out into hysterical laughter, and complained of violent pain in the stomach and bowels. It was at this stage that the other servants began to suspect that she was under the influence of the Bouda. In a short time she became quiet, and by degrees sank into a state of lethargy, approaching to insensibility. Either from excellent acting and great fortitude, or from real want of feeling, the various experiments which we made on her seemed to have no more effect than they would have had on a mesmeric somnambulist.* We pinched her repeatedly; but pinch as hard as we could, she never moved a muscle of her face, nor did she otherwise express the least sensation. I held a bottle of strong sal volatile under her nose, and stopped her

* Many of the symptoms seem nearly to resemble those in ordinary cases of *epilepsy*.

mouth ; and this having no effect, I steeped some rag in it and placed it in her nostrils ; but, although I am sure that she had never either seen, smelt, or heard of such a preparation as liquid ammonia, it had no more effect on her than rose-water. She held her thumbs tightly bent inside her hands, as if to prevent their being seen. On my observing this to a bystander, he told me that the thumbs were the Bouda's particular perquisite, and that he would allow no person to take them. Consequently, several persons tried to open her hand and get at them, but she resisted with what appeared to me wonderful strength for a girl, and bit their fingers till in more than one instance she drew blood. I, among others, made the attempt, and, though I got a bite or two for my pains, yet either the devil had great respect for me as an Englishman and a good Christian, or she had for me as her master, for the biting was all a sham, and struck me as more like kissing than anything else, compared with the fearful wounds she had inflicted on the rest of the party.

I had a string of ornamental amulets which I usually wore, having on it many charms for various maladies ; but I was perfectly aware that none for the Bouda was among them. Still, hoping thereby to expose the cheat, I asserted that there was a very celebrated one, and laid the whole string on her face, expecting that she would pretend to feel the effects, and act accordingly ; but, to my surprise and disappointment, she remained quite motionless. Several persons had been round the village to look for some talisman, but only one was found. On its being applied to her mouth she for an instant sprang up, bit at it, and tore it, but then laughed, and said it was weak, and would not vex *him*. I here use the masculine gender, because, though the patient be a woman, the Bouda is supposed to speak through her medium ; and, of whatever sex they be, the sufferers, or rather the spirits, when speaking of themselves, invariably use that gender. I deluged her with bucketfuls of water, but could not even elicit from her a start or a pant, an effect usually produced by water suddenly dashed over a person.

At night she could not sleep, but became more restless, and spoke several times. She once remarked, in her natural tone of voice, that she was not ill, nor attacked by the Bouda, but merely wished to return to Adoua. She said this so naturally that I was completely taken off my guard, and told her that of course she might go, but that she must wait till the morrow. The other people smiled, and whispered me that it was only a device of the Bouda's to get her into the forest, and there devour her.

Singular coincidences not unfrequently occur in such a way as to encourage superstitious persons in their credulity; and, strange to say, that very night, for the first and last time that I ever heard him during my stay at Rohabaita, the hyæna kept howling and laughing close to the village. This animal, as well as the jackal, is very common in the populous districts of Abyssinia, where he finds plenty of offal, but he seldom troubles himself to visit these desolate and almost uninhabited regions: consequently, his appearance that evening was hailed by all the people with a feeling of horror, as they doubtless connected it with the woman's sickness. I was regarded, even by my own servants, as a man devoid of all sensibility, because I ventured to smile at the idea, and to treat the whole matter as an imposture. So completely indeed were they overcome, that they forgot all their respect for me; and one or two of them did not scruple to express their opinion to my face.

At night I ordered the people to close the door of the hut, and lie across it, some inside and some out. These precautions, however, did not satisfy them; and they insisted on having the young woman bound hand and foot, as the only means of preventing her escape. She lay pretty still, merely moaning, and occasionally starting up when the hyæna called. I was lying on a couch, she and the other people on the floor. Determined to see the issue of the affair, I watched her narrowly, and when the guard dropped off to sleep, one by one, I pretended to do so likewise. She also was perfectly still for near an hour, and I fancied that she too had fallen asleep, when suddenly, the hyæna calling

close by, she to my astonishment, rose without her bonds, which I had seen, as I imagined, securely fastened. She then crept on all-fours towards the door, which she succeeded in partly opening. I was just going to spring on her when one of the heavily-sleeping guards made a noise, which sounded something like a grunt or a snore, and it appeared to me that she stifled a laugh. This led me to believe more and more that she was shamming, but I said nothing, and she returned of her own accord to her place. Although she did not sleep during the whole night, yet she remained still as long as the people were quiet, only moaning a little whenever any one, by yawning or otherwise, showed signs of waking. Next day she appeared a little better, and talked more rationally, but still very wildly, and would neither eat nor drink. Once we allowed her to leave the hut for a moment, on pretence of necessity, and she went out quietly enough; but her return being delayed longer than we considered right, parties were sent out in quest of her, and after a long search she was discovered more than a mile from the hut, and making for the thickest of the jungle.

The second night was passed much as the former one; but the following day we prevailed on her to take a little bread. On swallowing a piece about the size of a nut she became very sick; and a draught of water produced a similar result. A better night seemed to do her good, for on the following day she managed to eat a little, and by slow degrees recovered her health.

If this were a trick, as doubtless all my readers will declare it to have been, I would only ask what she gained by it? for beyond making a little bread, and occasionally a dish or two of cookery, she had no work to do—at any rate nothing that could induce her to prefer three days' confinement, with plenty of pinches, cords, and drenching with cold water, without a moment's sleep, and, worse than all to any Abyssinian, total abstinence from food and drink!

This being the first case I witnessed, I noted it down

minutely ; but as the charms failed to do their work, which is made to make the spirit speak, scarce half of the principal features of the malady were displayed. The people all agreed that it was providential the straw did not break when the blacksmith was working the charm ; for, having procured no antidote, she must assuredly have died had it done so.

Since this occurrence I have witnessed many hoaxes easy to discover, but also many which I could never see through, although I tried every method that my small stock of ingenuity could invent.

I remember once a poor weakly girl on whom I had tried several false charms, but without her moving. She was lying, apparently senseless, in the inner court of a house at Adoua, and numbers of persons were passing to and fro to see her, when, suddenly starting up, she screamed and struggled with so much strength, that, on seizing her by the legs and shoulders, I and three other powerful men could scarcely keep her down. A man near me said, "I am sure some one has with him a strong charm : if so, let him produce it." All denied the fact ; but just then a stranger entered from the outer court, when she cried out, "Let me alone, and I will speak." This man was an Amhàra soldier, perfectly unknown to all of us, but who, hearing one of our people inquire for charms in a house where he was drinking, had volunteered to try one which he wore, and which he declared to be very potent. On placing the amulet near her, she yelled and screamed horribly. The owner (addressing her as a woman) said, "Will you declare yourself if I take it away?" She howled still more at this insult, as she called it, and said, "I am no woman." The question was then repeated several times in the masculine, but she invariably attempted to evade a direct answer, till, as if worn out, she exclaimed, "I will tell all ; only take it far from me !" It was accordingly removed to some distance from her, and she immediately sank down as if exhausted.

Now, no one who has not witnessed some specimens of

this (we will call it) humbug can judge how admirably the supposed sufferers act their parts. I can assure the reader that in my judgment no professional actor on our London boards could hold a candle to them. The sudden change from the frantic rage which is expressed when the antidote is offered, to the perfect appearance of both mental and bodily prostration which ensues on its being removed, and *vice versâ*, is acted to nature; and I would defy the most incredulous and matter-of-fact person in the world to witness it without feeling at least a considerable degree of astonishment.

How these deceptions, if such they be, should have been practised, doubtless for centuries, in all parts of Abyssinia, and also in Sennâr, where the Bouda exercises his power under the title of Sahâr, without their fallacy having ever become public, is to me also a matter of wonder.

But to return to the patient, whom we left lying in a state of semi-animation. The persons round her questioned her, first asking *his* name (always, for fear of offending, addressing her as a man). She answered in the language peculiar to the Bouda, and which all the afflicted seem to speak. The bystanders could not, of course, comprehend it, probably because it was gibberish. Still some words were recognised as those usually uttered in such cases, though their meaning was unknown. She was then threatened with a reproduction of the charm, if she persisted in her obstinacy; at which menace she trembled violently, and promised to answer in an intelligible language. The question being repeated, she said, "I am such a one, son of such a one, of such a place," mentioning the name and village of a supposed Bouda. By degrees she was compelled to state the motives of the persecution, and to declare by her own mouth that the woman (herself) must die if the proper remedy was not procured. And then came a severe battle to know what was to be this expulsory antidote. At last, this, too, was wormed from her and procured. Then the Bouda, anxious to delay his exit as long as possible, demanded food (as he always does) before

leaving her. A basin was fetched, in which was put a quantity of any filth that could be found (of fowls, dogs, &c.), and mixed up with a little water and some ashes. I took the basin myself, and hid it where I was positive she could not see me place it, and covered it up with some loose stones which were heaped in the corner. The Bouda was then told that his supper was prepared, and the woman rose and crawled down the court on all fours, smelling like a dog on either side, till, passing into the yard where the basin was, she went straight up to it, and, grubbing it out from the place where it was hidden, devoured its abominable contents with the utmost greediness. The Bouda was then supposed to leave her, and she fell to the ground, as if fainting. From this state she recovered her health in a few days.

I had forgotten to mention that one of the principal symptoms is a great longing for charcoal, of which the patient will eat any quantity she can obtain. The first proof of the devil's leaving her is her allowing her thumbs to be taken hold of.

One of my servants, who, by the great anxiety he showed in watching and tending the patients, was evidently convinced of the truth of their sufferings, had himself been attacked many years before, and assured me that after his recovery he had not the slightest recollection of anything that had taken place while the fit was on him, but that his friends had told him all about it. How was it possible that this man, supposing his own illness to have been feigned, could be cheated by the same means?

What most astonished me was the way that the talisman seemed to act. It is generally some sort of root, with occasionally a bit of hyæna's skin, sewn up in a small morocco case. I have more than once concealed one under my clothes, and, going up behind the patient's head, touched her with it. No sooner was this done than she started up frantically, although dozens of persons were pulling her about in every direction at the same moment.

Just as often, however, have I detected impostures. I had once a great strapping wench for a cook. She was as strong as a camel, rather good-looking, and an uncommonly willing servant; so that I was sorry to hear one fine evening that she had been attacked by the Evil One. I could not help laughing at the idea of what a job we should have to master her, especially as I had seen little weak emaciated creatures cause considerable trouble to four or five strong men. But, from a hint of my black servant Saïd, I found that he had given her a taste of the whip that afternoon. The fact was, that the naughty girl had, contrary to the prejudices of her country, allowed herself to become his sweetheart, he being a Mussulman and she a Christian; and the whipping was the issue of a lover's quarrel. Judging by all this that her malady was the work of a very mischievous little devil, called Cupid, and not of the Bouda—in fact, that she was merely shamming, for the purpose of exciting her cruel lover's sympathy—I determined to act accordingly. Poor girl! she sadly overrated the tenderness of her amoroso. He, as usual, half drunk, began to laugh at her, and, calling her camel, buffalo, and other endearing names, requested her in no very polite manner to get up and prepare him some supper. I, for my part, believing that the woman was not likely at once to admit that she was playing us a hoax, put a serious face on the matter, and proposed to try a very efficacious remedy, which, as I said, the son of Oubi had given me on my last visit to the camp. Accordingly, going to my room, I pulled two or three bits of dry bamboo-roots from the hut, and wrapped them carefully in a piece of paper, together with an old leaf or two, some pipe-ashes, and a bit of hair which I cut from the tail of my faithful dog Maychal Boggo. Proceeding then to the place where the sufferer lay, I ordered a large-mouthed jar to be filled with dry mules'-dung and lighted. When this had been done, and the smoke began to rise in clouds, I put into it a small quantity of my charm, with every appearance of caution and care; which done, we seized the unfortunate victim, and with some difficulty forced her head

close to the jar's mouth, and then rolled a quarry round it and the jar, so as at once to keep her fast, and prevent the escape of the smallest quantity of smoke. As may be imagined, in a moment she began to cough violently, and at last, being almost suffocated, cried out, "Let me off, for pity's sake; I am not ill, but only shamming!" I solemnly asserted this to be only a device of the Evil One to get away from the charm, and held on, till her cries for pity, for the sake of the Virgin, of Oubi, &c., becoming more confused and her cough more violent, I feared lest she might suffer too much if kept longer. On being liberated she presented a deplorable appearance. Her cough continued for some time; her eyes were bloodshot and streaming with tears; and the shame she felt at the *dénouement* was not at all lessened by the jeers of her fellow-servants, and by my telling her that as I had discovered so good a medicine I should not fail to use it on all occasions, and moreover by my delivering to her especial charge the jar of smoking dung which had wrought so wonderful a cure. That magic vessel was preserved in a conspicuous situation in the hut where the women worked till I left the place; and I must say that the attacks of Bouda were less frequent after this occurrence than before; though still I had occasional cases where the sunken eye and vacant stare cheated me into tenderness of heart, and I refrained from the use of my singular but most efficacious remedy.

Many cases have been related to me, wherein the friends of the possessed, having procured charms of sufficient power to force the spirit to declare his name and residence, but not equal to turning him out, went at once to the place indicated, and, seizing on the blacksmith, brought him forcibly to their home, where, having fed him well, he was commanded to quit his victim, and at the same time his life was threatened, lances being pointed at his breast.

In the neighbourhood of Adoua there is a story current of a woman who had one foot natural, and in the place of the other the hoof of a donkey. I have frequently made inquiries respecting this story; and in answer, several persons have

assured me that they had themselves seen the monstrosity ; while others, though they could not boast of having been eye-witnesses of the fact, firmly believed in the truth of the account, having heard it related by many credible persons. The story, which is illustrative of another species of power attributed to the Bouda, was as follows :—

The woman, having died, had been buried with all due ceremony in the churchyard. Next day a man came to one of the priests, who I suppose was a bad man, such indeed being occasionally found in holy orders, and offered him a sum of money for the body, pledging himself to the strictest secrecy. The priest doubtless thought that, as the body could not be of use to any one else, there could be no harm in his making it useful to himself by the gain of an honest penny, especially as nobody was to know what had occurred. The bargain was accordingly concluded to the satisfaction of both parties, and the corpse disinterred and carried off by the stranger. Nothing more transpired, nor indeed did these facts become known, until some time after. The stranger, who was a blacksmith, was in the habit of passing, on his way to market, the house where the departed old woman's family lived. After her death he had been seen to ride or drive a remarkably fine donkey, which, strangely enough, on passing the house or any of the old lady's children, brayed loudly, and endeavoured to run towards them. At first no notice was taken of this singular propensity, but at last one of the sons (a fine, intelligent young man) exclaimed, "I feel convinced that that ass is my mother !" Accordingly, Bouda, ass, and all were seized and brought to the hut, much to the apparent satisfaction of the quadruped, who rubbed her nose against the young men, and, if I was rightly informed, shed tears of joy on the occasion. On being charged with the offence, the Bouda at first pretended to make light of it, denying the accusation as absurd ; but at last, by dint of threats and promises, he was induced to confess the facts I have related, and how he had by his art turned the old woman into a donkey, she having been not really dead, but in a trance, into which he

had purposely thrown her. His power, he said, was sufficient to change the external appearance, but not to alter the mind of his subject. Hence it was that the old woman, or rather donkey, possessed human feelings, which she had displayed in her endeavours to enter her former habitation, and in her recognition of her children. The Bouda moreover agreed to restore to her her human appearance, and began his exorcism. As he proceeded, she by degrees assumed her natural form, and the change appeared to be complete, when one of the sons, blinded by his rage, forgot the promises of pardon which the Bouda had exacted from them all, and drove his spear through his heart. Alas, for impatience! The incantation not being entirely completed, one foot yet remained asinine, and continued so until her death actually occurred, which was not till many years afterwards.

Dejatch Oubi, who enjoys the reputation of being far superior to most of his countrymen in his abundance of intellect and his superiority to superstition, appears to believe firmly in the power of the Bouda. On one occasion he gave a most striking proof of his faith; for, a soldier dying shortly after the name and residence of his tormenter had been extorted from him, the unfortunate blacksmith, thus described, was seized by order of the Prince, and, after some investigation of the matter, condemned, with part of his family, to be put to death. I forget how they were killed, but have an impression that they were thrown into a pit, in which a large fire had been lighted, and burned to death.

A rather amusing way of turning this art into a more profitable and less offensive line of business than killing people or making them sick, or even turning them into beasts of burden, is told of two brothers who lived in some part of Gojam. One of them, having submitted to be turned into a horse, ass, or cow, was sold by his brother at the market, and conducted by his purchaser out of the town. As soon, however, as night closed the eyes of his new master, the Bouda resumed his humanity, and walked quietly home.

It so often occurred that one or other of the brothers sold some animal in the market, that people began to inquire whence their cattle were obtained, as they were never known to keep any stock, nor even to have any beast in their yard till the day of sale arrived. Still more extraordinary in the eyes of the suspicious was the fact that every animal they sold made its escape the same night, and was never more heard of. At last, a soldier or chief, rather more ingenious than the rest, and probably with his wits sharpened by the fact of his having already been taken in twice, determined to risk his money a third time, in hopes of discovering the fraud. Accordingly, one market-day he bought a very fine-looking horse from one of the brothers, and took it away with him. Instead, however, of allowing him to wait till night should favour his escape, no sooner was he outside the town than he drove his lance through the heart of his new purchase, and returned to the town to watch the effects which the news might produce on the seller. Meeting him as it were accidentally, he told him (cursing his own heat of temper) how he had in a passion killed the beautiful animal he had just bought of him. The Bouda started, but managed to conceal his emotion till he arrived at home, when, closing the door, he gave vent to his lamentations, wailing and rubbing the skin off his forehead, as is customary at the death of a near relation. On being questioned by the neighbours as to the cause of his grief, he replied that news had reached him of the death of his brother, who he said had been robbed and murdered in the Galla country, whither he had gone some few days before in quest of horses. Whether his or my version of the story be true, I pretend not to say ; but I was assured that he never again offered animals for sale in the market.

So much for the Bouda. The "Tigritiya" is his near relation, but generally a far more disagreeable and dangerous devil than he. His dependents are supposed to be found in great numbers in Gojam, which province indeed is celebrated for sorcerers of all kinds. I am not sure whether the blacksmiths exercise this art as well as the former one,

but believe not. Strange to say, I find nothing in my notes about its origin; and my usually faithful memory has failed me on this point.

As the influence of Tigritya, like that of Bouda, is more frequently felt by women than by men, it has happened that the one or two cases which I have witnessed have been among the fair sex. I shall therefore speak of the patient in the feminine gender, though one is required to be more cautious in thus addressing her than even in cases of Bouda; for with the latter the consequences are that the male spirit waxes rather sulky, and refuses to answer your questions, while in a case of Tigritya it often happens that this mistake of the sex may cause a patient apparently recovering to go into a frenzy, and relapse into her worst state. This malady is of less frequent occurrence than the other, and is not only more dangerous, but also more difficult of explanation. The first symptoms usually are the gradual wasting away of the attacked person, without any cause being apparent either to herself or her relatives. At last, however, after dieting and the ordinary medicines have been unsuccessfully tried, it becomes a matter of suspicion to her friends, who determine on ascertaining whether or no she be afflicted with this devil. The first thing to be observed is to feed her daintily and dress her neatly. As her complaint and this treatment advance, she becomes peevish and fretful, and is always longing for something or other. Whatever she demands must be procured, else she will become sulky, and, covering up her head, remain sometimes for days without eating or speaking. Ornaments of all kinds require to be borrowed for her, often at much trouble to her unfortunate relations: for she is rarely satisfied unless she gets an assortment of those worn by both sexes, even to the lion's skin of a warrior; and these are frequently almost impossible to procure. With some persons it is necessary to have recourse to music before the real cause of their complaint can be discovered. Drums and other musical instruments are collected outside the chamber door, and the musicians suddenly strike up all together, when the patient is not expecting it.

If her illness be of an ordinary kind she will of course beg of them to desist, but, if possessed, she will leap or fall from her couch to the ground, and commence shrugging her shoulders and swinging her head to and fro in time with the music; beginning with a slight movement, but gradually increasing in pace as she appears to become excited, till at last her motions are so violent that a spectator is led to fear for the 'safety of her neck. It is truly wonderful to see a sick person whom you have just beheld stretched on a bed, a weak, emaciated bag of bones, apparently without strength to rise, keeping up this very fatiguing motion with a velocity and power of endurance that would be astonishing even in an ordinarily strong person. On the music's ceasing she rests, and then begins to speak, telling *his* name (that is, the devil's) and his family; and it is usually after this that she demands the trinkets, specifying each article that she requires, and making their production the condition of her dancing again. She, as I before said, generally contrives to name objects that are most difficult to obtain, such as the silver-ornamented velvet worn only by great war-chiefs; and much sorrow and trouble does this cause to her relations, for she will not be persuaded to show any signs of animation if a single article she has named be not forthcoming; and on her dancing and singing is supposed chiefly to depend her chance of recovery.

The Abyssinians, when startled or alarmed, are in the habit of exclaiming, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!"—as a Roman Catholic would cross himself if similarly situated. Great care must be taken to avoid using these words in the presence of a possessed person, when she is in an animated or dancing fit; for even to whisper them to one-self would assuredly cause a terrible convulsion and entire relapse of the sufferer. A friend of mine cautioned me against this while we were going together to visit a sick person. He told me that once, hearing that there was an extraordinary case in a village where he was a perfect stranger, he went to the place, and found a lady engaged in dancing amid a crowd

of her friends. No sooner did he approach than she sprang towards him and ordered him to dance with her; at the same time filling her mouth with milk from a can near her, she spirted it into his face. Naturally startled by this unexpected reception, and being a man of decidedly nervous temperament, my poor friend, not approving of this proximity of the devil, ejaculated the fatal words. Scarcely, however, had they passed his lips, when the woman, uttering a terrific scream, threw herself on the ground and tore off all her clothes and ornaments, while her husband, who also it appears, was more or less affected by the Tigritya, drew his shotel, and made a ferocious attack on the unwitting offender. The bystanders prevented him from doing mischief, but even they considered that my friend's fault deserved some punishment, and so held him fast till they should decide on his fate. The woman was raised from the ground, where she lay kicking and foaming at the mouth, and was carried to her house, whither also the prisoner was led. A consultation was then held as to what punishment he merited, which, from the tone of the majority, appeared likely to be very severe; and many of the party were of opinion that, even after he had suffered for this offence, he should still be kept prisoner, and put to death if in a certain time the patient did not recover. Luckily, however, while the consultation was yet going on, the chief of the village, who had heard of the disturbance, came in to ascertain the cause of it, which, being fully explained, and the prisoner telling him that he was a defterer or scribe in the service of the bishop (which latter clause was, however, untrue), the chief commanded that he should immediately be set at liberty, remarking that it was not only probable but even right that a Christian should appeal to the Almighty when in fear of the assaults of the Evil One.

Thus much for the symptoms and treatment of this rather extraordinary complaint. The mode of ejecting the Old Gentleman from his temporary possession is something similar to what we have already described. After the patient has been induced to dance pretty frequently, it is to be

hoped that the devil is put into a tolerably good humour, which desideratum can only be obtained by making frequent and polite inquiries when he will be pleased to have music, and by promptly procuring everything he may demand, by the mouth of the possessed, whether it be food or wearing apparel. The auspicious moment arriving, the friends of the sufferer inquire of her when *he* will be disposed to quit his present residence and go to his own place. The first time this question is ventured upon, the spirit generally replies that he is not yet satisfied with the entertainment he has received at their hands, and seizes the opportunity of demanding something more. After a time, however, if things go on well, he fixes a day for taking his leave, usually the 7th after the day on which he makes the announcement. The happy time having arrived, a large party is assembled in some wild spot in the country, and there must be feasting, dancing, and music, as before, but, if possible, carried on with more than usual spirit. The patient joins in with the rest; and the devil, when satisfied, announces his intention to depart. This he signifies through the medium of his victim, who takes off her finery; then bowing her head, she kisses her hands in token of farewell, and starts off, running at a pace which few men could equal. She cannot, however, keep it up for more than from fifty to a hundred yards, when she falls to the ground senseless. At this moment the spirit is supposed to have left her; and lest he should find himself worse off outside than in, and, changing his mind, return to her, five or six active young men are prepared beforehand, and as soon as she starts they follow her, and, coming up with her just as she is falling, place themselves in threatening attitudes round her body, one holding a drawn sword, another firing a charge of powder out of a matchlock, and a third brandishing a lance. This is supposed to intimidate the fiend, and prevent his return, should he be so disposed.

The woman, who but a moment before was outdoing all the party, both in the dance and in running, now lies stretched on the ground helpless and emaciated, as if after a long illness. She faintly calls for water, which is given

her; and when a little restored, she is asked her name, which she answers correctly: and as a conclusive proof of her freedom from the power of the Evil One, she is requested to repeat the formerly so much dreaded words—"B'ism Ab, ou Weld, ou Menfus Kouddos" (In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost). A sheep or a fowl is killed, broiled on the embers, and eaten with bread. The patient's friends partake of this food when the devil goes out of her. The bones and remains of the meat are burned with fire, and the fragments of the bread buried in the ground. These are so left for the devil, that if he should come back to the place he may remain and feed, and not go on and bother the woman. Thus is the cure complete, though it often takes a considerable time to effect it.

To many of my readers it will doubtless appear, and very naturally, that all these symptoms are impostures resorted to by the pretended sufferers as a means of procuring the borrowed finery, and enjoying the gaities and festivities which are considered as the means of curing their disorder. This sounds very probable; and I cannot deny that such is my own opinion, though there are still some points which have rather puzzled me.—First, as in the Bouda, the extraordinary talent for acting which they display, and then the fact that the imposture has not been discovered and published centuries ago, but that it is still believed by the very people among whom it has so long been and still daily continues to be practised. How is it possible that a woman, who in her youthful days may have been guilty of such a hoax, should suffer herself to be imposed upon and led into so much trouble and expense by her children afterwards? And yet this is of common occurrence. From this last remark, let it not be supposed that young women are the only sufferers: men and women of all ages are liable, though the young of the fair sex are perhaps the most frequently possessed. Lastly, the most puzzling thing of all is when a person acts sickness to such perfection that Azraël himself is deceived, and, mistaking the feigned malady for a real one, finishes it by seriously taking away the life of the shammer.

The following case will illustrate what I mean. I had a servant named Bairou, a youth of about nineteen, but who, from having been several years in the service of Europeans, had acquired a few of their notions ; and among others, had learnt to ridicule the superstitions of his countrymen. He had a sister who had been ill for several months, and no one knew what her complaint was. At his request I went to visit her more than once, but was unable to do anything for her. The fact is, my doctoring is on a very limited scale ; and, as even the most eminent physicians agree that the greatest difficulty is to ascertain what is really the matter with a patient, I stood very little chance with Bairou's sister, who complained of nothing, and showed no marked signs of ailing, except in entire prostration of strength, and a rapid falling off of flesh. She gradually got worse, till one day her brother came to me and requested me to lend him my ornaments, and also to beg some more from my friends at the camp. I asked him whether he was going to be "arkey" to some friend about to marry ; but he answered with a melancholy smile that he wanted them for his sister ; as, having tried everything else, their friends had proposed to see if she were possessed, and he, though not believing any such nonsense, was willing to allow them to try the experiment, lest, if anything happened to her, they should upbraid him afterwards for having caused her death by his obstinacy and incredulity.

I of course quite approved of his determination, and easily succeeded in obtaining the articles required of me. She was dressed up in the borrowed finery as she lay on the couch ; and at a signal the musicians outside commenced playing. At the first notes her eyes began to brighten, and, raising herself up for the first time during many days, she swayed her body to and fro for a few moments, after the manner of one possessed ; but, becoming quickly exhausted, she sank back, saying with a faint smile, "It is too late now !" She repeated these words twice : they were the last I ever heard her utter. Three hours after she was a corpse. Was this, too, a sham ? Or what may it be called ? Possibly some freak of her disordered imagination.

Now, having concluded this diabolical subject, I may venture to deduce from it one or two pieces of advice to my fair readers. First, to such of them as may be of a nervous temperament, I would recommend a glass of something warm before going to bed, lest, having read this, they should dream of the devil. Secondly, to be cautious about shamming hysterics; for I doubt not that in a very short time my jar of smoke, for which I think of obtaining a patent, by the name of the "Patent Anti-Hystericon Abyssinicum," will be in general use. Thirdly, to remember a truth clearly told in the description of the Tigritiya, namely, that excessive fondness for dress, ornaments, and dancing, are some proofs of being possessed by the devil.

Besides the possessing devils which we have described, the natives of Abyssinia believe in the existence of many other kinds of spirits, more or less malignant in their dispositions, as well as in ghosts, &c. There is a species of evil genius which they call Dabbas, occasionally to be met with in certain parts of the town of Adoua. One of his most favourite haunts is said to be in the street near the brook where Hajji Yohannes, the Armenian blacksmith, lives; another near the house of Ato Wässan, the Governor; and the third near the old palace on the top of the hill. The form that he assumes is a sort of thick blueish mist, quite different from any other vapour in its appearance, and something horrible to look at. I have asked many persons whether the vapour assumes a human form in its outline, but have never obtained a satisfactory answer: "It does, and it does not, but it is fearful to see," being generally the rather vague reply. Woe betide the man who should either rashly or inadvertently approach too near to the terrible spirit; for so surely as any one passes by it, he feels a cold shudder all over his body, the certain forerunner of death. Some are said to have fallen at once dead on the spot; and though a few have lived to reach their homes and relate the horrors they have encountered, none has ever recovered from the baneful influence of the Dabbas.

There are persons in the country who are supposed to be

able to call up spirits, and obtain from them any information they may require. These men are mostly Defterers (or Scribes), and are regarded with a certain amount of rather dubious respect. The scene of their incantation is generally some ravine, with a stream running through it. As I have only heard the reports of the common people on the subject, I cannot describe accurately what ceremonies are observed, or what form the devil assumes on quitting the water at their summons. My informants, however, assured me that he came as a great chief, with the usual train of shield-bearers behind him, and gunners before him.

Oubi has one of these sorcerers, who procures for him any information he may require. This man, who is reputed to be very learned, is of quiet retiring manners and amiable disposition. For some time past he has been suffering from a cutaneous disease,—not, however, leprosy, but, like that complaint, it has left him nearly white. The common people positively assert that this change of colour was caused by a stroke from the devil, whom he had summoned.

The “Fellàty,” or knowing ones (called in the Amhàric “Awàhy,” which has the same meaning), are a set of impostors, who pretend that they are prophets; or rather, that by the aid of the saints and divine inspiration they can discover secrets of any kind. In some parts of Abyssinia their decision, in matters of dispute where no witnesses can be procured, is considered infallible,—so much so, that it not unfrequently occurs that two disputants, who may appear before a judge without either being able to produce testimony to substantiate his cause, are referred to the Fellàty. The prophet is not always in condition to act—certain days or nights, such as the period of the full moon, and other epochs, being his times of consultation. On these occasions he is seated in his house among his friends and servants, filling their wondering ears with adventures (if so they may be called) of his life; such as, how on a certain mountain he had an interview with such a one of the saints, &c. The persons who wish to appeal to him have only to come and

stand outside ; for it is pretended that he can see them even through the wall ; nay more, that he can at once divine their business and the merits of the cause to be tried. Then he will say to those around him, "Two (or more) persons are outside the house : they are come to inquire of me on such and such a matter : let them be called !" So they are admitted, and he at once decides the case, without needing to put any questions to either party. Thus, suppose the dispute to be about some money, which the one accuses the other of having stolen from him : the Fellàty will instantly declare that the man is innocent or guilty : if the latter, he will detail to the greatest nicety the place whence the money was taken, the dress the man wore at the time, and every particular connected with the affair.

Although, as I have before said, the people in some parts of the country have great faith in the revelations of these men, they are nevertheless under the ban of the Church, and are not admitted into places of worship. Persons who consult them are likewise excommunicated until they shall have confessed their fault and received absolution. Dejatch Oubi had formerly one of them with him—a Galla by birth, named Abou Aizer. This man had been in the service of Oubi's father, Dejatch Hailo Mariam, and for many years had contrived by good luck, and doubtless some talent, to keep his post of adviser, and to laugh at everybody with great success ; but at last he overreached himself, for he counselled the Prince to go to Devra Tabor and fight Ali, telling him that he should come off victorious, and possess the whole of his rival's territories. Oubi went ; and, having lost the day, was put into prison. Abou Aizer was prudent enough to fly for refuge to a convent in Wàldabba, as soon as the news of Oubi's liberation reached him.

I have asked several natives whether they placed any faith in the pretensions of these men. Some have replied that there was no doubt in the matter ; while a good many others, and I suspect the most sensible part of my informants, told me that in their opinion there was a good deal of trickery in

it; and that, although there were possibly some true Fellàty, yet the decisions of many so calling themselves were only based on an extraordinary acquaintance with the persons, habits, houses, &c., of every one in the neighbourhood; and that by aid of this knowledge and a good deal of tact they often succeeded in giving a just decision, which, from the apparently astonishing detail of their descriptions, seemed to the vulgar to be surely the words of inspiration. Should, however, their answer be unsatisfactory or their sentence unjust, they fall back on some excuse; such as that the season or hour was not propitious. In most parts of Abyssinia their decision is not considered as legal or binding.

There are two sets of these fellows: the one having for their patron St. George, the other following a saint called Abouna Zeràbrok. This saint's story is rather amusing from its extreme absurdity; and though, perhaps, it should have been related with those of Aragàwy and Gabro Menfus Kouddos, I will tell it here, on the principle of "better late than never."

Abouna Zeràbrok is said to have been a monk of Tima, in the province of Maytcha, a very holy man, and living as a recluse entirely in the wilds and forests, far from the temptations and lures of society. One day, being desirous to travel, twelve wings sprouted from different parts of his body, and by their aid he flew to the extreme edge of the earth (in those days the earth was flat), and found that the world was encircled by two enormous serpents, a male and a female; the name of the former being Biheyamote, and that of the latter Yohattan. To appease their hunger the birds of the air, of their own accord, flew into their mouths, while an angel kept continually pouring water down their throats to quench their thirst. Our friend Zeràbrok, having ascertained their names and mode of living, was farther prompted by curiosity to count the number of their teeth, probably to ascertain their age. So, going to the male, he said to him, "Biheyamote, I command thee, in the name of the Lord, to open wide thy mouth!" The serpent obeyed,

and the saint walked in, first having placed his staff upright between the jaws, lest, on account of his twelve wings, the monster should mistake him for a covey of birds and devour him. He counted his teeth to the number of many millions, and then withdrew. An angel, appearing to him, commanded him to return to his country, and giving up his solitary life instruct his children (disciples) in what he had seen. This he did until the day of his death. The convent called by his name is now resorted to by many sick persons, or by those possessed of the devil, or madmen. The friends of the patients bring with them jars, which they fill with water and place near the church. The priests then read the life of Zeràbrok, and certain other offices, 'over the water; after which it is supposed that the spirit of the saint descends into it; and, thus sanctified, it is dashed over the heads of the afflicted persons by their relations. This treatment is considered very efficacious in cases of lunacy. After one or two jars have been poured over him a madman usually speaks, declaring how the saint has appeared to him and promised him his recovery, admonishing him to lead a new life, and to devote his time to good deeds and charity.

This is the effect which the water *should* have. It sometimes, however, happens that sickly subjects die under this rather rough treatment. These, notwithstanding, are better off than those who recover, for they are believed to pass at once into heaven, even though their lives have been sinful.

There is another set of impostors, called "Zacchàri," or the disciples of Abouna Abel. These are confined exclusively to the provinces of Tigrè, where they are in great numbers, and have several meeting-places (not to call them monasteries), the principal of which is in Hatzabo, near Axum. It is situated on a hill, near the top of which springs a small stream that in falling forms a sort of cascade. Many sick persons go thither to bathe, having great faith in the reputed healing properties of the water. Hard by is the

residence of the chief of the Zacchàri, whom the bathers usually think right to propitiate with small donations, the smallest of which are gladly received.

Once a year, on the anniversary of the patron saint, young people of both sexes collect at this spot, and pass three days in feasting and dancing. Priests, and men who enjoy a reputation for learning or dignity, do not, however, patronize these assemblies. The influence of the Zacchàri is, indeed, confined almost entirely to the lower classes. A man of any pretension to education would order one of them out of his house, if he came to bother him : a great chief, like Oubi, would probably have him whipped for his pains. Moreover, like the Fellàty, they are excommunicated, and (unless secretly and disguised) cannot enter a church. In some points they resemble certain sects of Mohammedan derwishes. They are impudent beggars : their principal victims are the wives of the country peasantry. The husband being out at his work, one of them will enter the house, attired in a strange costume, chiefly formed of leopard-skins, growling and roaring like a wild beast, and striking himself with a staff ornamented with rings of brass or silver, which they all carry. He will demand of the poor woman a piece of cloth, or a quantity of corn, or whatever article he may fancy, snarling horribly at her all the while, and threatening that, should she not comply, some fearful domestic calamity, such as her death or that of her husband or child, will be the consequence. Moved by her fears and superstition, the poor woman usually gives him what he requires ; and then he promises her all sorts of happiness, the first fruits of which she mostly realizes in the form of a scolding, or perhaps a beating, from her husband on his return.

Like some derwishes, they show off feats of endurance by thrusting their feet into the fire, striking themselves with whips, pretending to cut their shoulders with swords, and various other tricks of jugglery ; continuing all the time to growl and roar at intervals, while telling the fortunes of the bystanders, who usually sweeten their prophetic tongues with gifts. They pretend to act thus from being moved by the

spirit ; the generality of the people, however, believe them rather to be in league with the devil.

Abouna Abel was a monk, and reputed a very just man ; in later life he became a hermit, and died in the odour of sanctity. As is the case with many originators of religious sects, the good example of his life has been forgotten, and the just principles he taught have been perverted to their present corrupt state by his degraded followers.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ANECDOTES ILLUSTRATIVE OF CHARACTER, &c.

It is a difficult task for any man to form a just opinion of the character of a nation through whose country he may have passed, or among whom he may have sojourned only for a short space of time. Travellers are far too apt to attribute to an entire population traits which they may have observed in the townspeople, or even in their own immediate followers. Such an estimate is evidently unfair: the servants usually chosen by foreigners, in all parts of the world, are of a stamp peculiar to themselves, and often but poor samples even of the class to which they nominally belong. No one who has made the tour of the Continent will have any difficulty in appreciating the truth of this remark; for surely neither the guides to curiosities, the laquais-de-place, and commissionaires, who speak a few words of English, in Europe, nor the Maltese, Greek, or Arab dragomen of the East, would be considered as fair specimens of servants; nor, indeed, would any one be justified in asserting that the Arabs are a cowardly race of beggars, merely because he may have been persecuted by cries of "backshish ya Khawàga!" (a present, Sir!) by the lads of Egypt, who had immediately turned tail on the approach of a "coubatch" (whip, made of hippopotamus-hide). Wherever travellers, no matter of what nation they be, are in the habit of passing, they spoil the people with whom they come in contact; or rather perhaps it is, that the people who volunteer their services to them are usually of not a very high grade. The newly-arrived tourist, from ignorance of the language, localities, and prices of the

country, naturally applies to his interpreter to ascertain where he may best purchase anything that he may need: the servant as naturally directs him to the shops of those tradesmen from whom he anticipates the highest percentage—thus our friend gets among a bad set of tradesmen. And so on, were I to give myself the pains—which I certainly should do if I thought thereby to interest my readers—I could portray, after the manner of Hogarth, a “Traveller’s Progress;” showing how, step by step, he advances, until he arrives at scene the last,—a totally false estimate of the nation’s character.

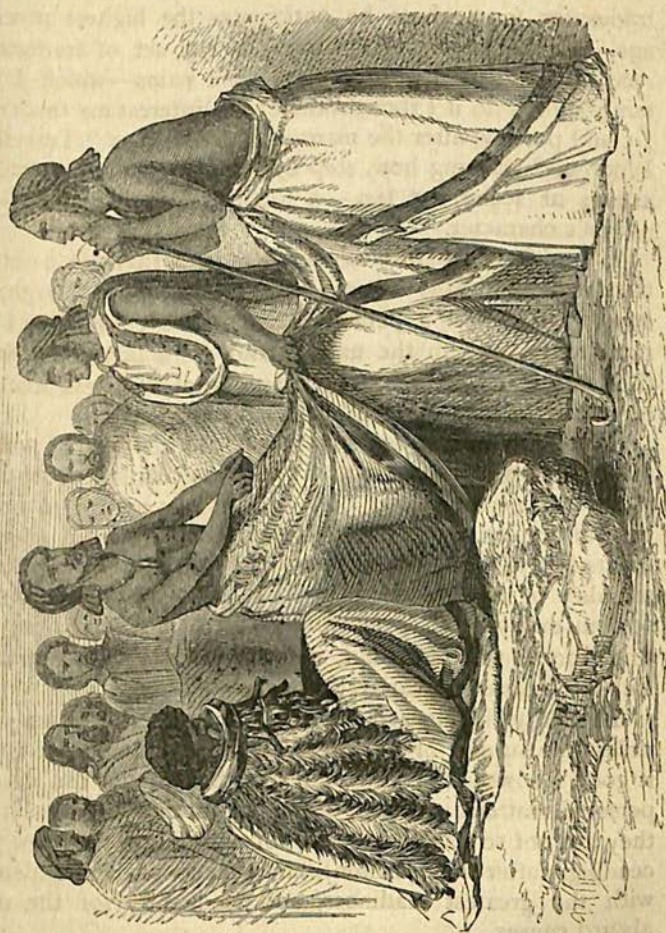
What I have said of *most* travellers is, perhaps, in a certain measure, applicable to *all*, myself included; though, of course, the longer a person remains in a country and the more he mixes with the natives and assimilates himself to them, which is of still greater importance, the less likely is he to form a false opinion of their dispositions.

There are errors, too, into which the readers of travels may fall as well as the writer: such as attributing to character what may belong only to custom; as, for instance, natural cruelty to a people on account of certain of their habits in war being cruel; immorality to those who allow a plurality of wives; or who, like our Abyssinian friends, seldom marry at all, preferring a sort of concubinage; and thievishness to a Bedouin, because he waylays a caravan. But this is nearly invariably wrong.

The Abyssinians are of an easily excited temper; but unless the subject of a quarrel be grievous, peace, and with it good fellowship, is quickly restored. This is the case in personal matters. Where, however, interest is concerned they are not so easily satisfied, for they enter into law proceedings (after their fashion), and the consequent expenses, with the greatest readiness, and frequently for the most absurd causes.

Their legal disputes are conducted in a rather different manner from our own. They have a sort of self-taught counsellor, who is called a “magwatch,” but who is neither educated for his profession nor called to the bar, being only

an ordinary man, with an extraordinary gift of the gab. These men are sometimes employed by the disputants in serious cases, but not invariably, as almost every one in the



"Mogwet," or Pleading.

country is more or less gifted. If two persons have a dispute on any subject, however trifling, one of them getting heated proposes to refer it to the chief, or "dainya," as he is termed. A servant of his is sent for, whose business is to

conduct the disputants before his master. He first ties the corners of their garments together in a knot, holding which in his hands, he adjures them by the back of Oubi, and by that of the chief, that neither of them should presume to speak while on their way. As this species of adjuration will be frequently mentioned during the following narrative, it may be as well to state here that the person who disobeys an order so given is liable to a fine, nominally of nine dollars, which is the perquisite of the chief, who, however, usually contents himself with exacting a part of it only. Some disputants nevertheless agree beforehand that a mule or cow shall be the forfeit.

Arrived at the chief's, the litigants are placed before him, with a servant between them, to prevent any personal disputes or blows, should they be inclined to give vent to their excited feelings. They then have permission to open the cause. And first the accuser begins by placing his opponent under restrictions, lest he should disturb his speech, which he does by adjuring him, as before, that he shall neither speak, nor advance his foot, nor move his hand in the way of gesture, until he shall have his permission to do so. It must be a very disagreeable thing, in an English court of law, to be obliged to hear the examination of the witnesses for the opposing party, without being able to contradict or answer any statement which you know to be false, or easy of explanation. How much more so must it be for a hot-tempered Abyssinian, just warm from a dispute, to stand by, unable even to gesticulate, while his opponent is savagely and perhaps unjustly attacking his honour, or, what is yet dearer to him, his interest! Still he dare not break through his restraint, unless he would pay the "Sabbar," or patience fine, before mentioned. All that he is allowed to do is to grunt "Em! em!" which he continues to do, in every tone and expression of voice, so long as his adversary keeps him under restriction. At last his turn comes, and, his tongue being liberated, he gives vent to his pent-up feelings in a proportionally excited answer; his accuser being in turn silenced, if he chooses. Witnesses are called; docu-

ments, if there be any, are referred to ; and judgment is passed.

But we have forgotten one part of the business, which is perhaps the most absurd of any, and at the same time the most lucrative to the chief. Bets, or rather forfeits, are made during the trial of the cause. For instance, if the subject of dispute be the ownership of a piece of land (by no means an uncommon cause of litigation in a country where title-deeds are traditionary), one party will say, "This land was held by my father, my grandfather, great-grandfather, &c., since the days of such and such a king ! On it, a mule !" Or sometimes even ten mules, each of which is reckoned at ten dollars. If the other accepts the challenge, the loser pays over the sum to the chief. Sometimes, however, when one of the parties is poorer than the other who offers the bet, he will say, "I cannot afford so much as ten mules : I make it a cow." This amendment is almost always agreed upon. Horses, guns, or any other article of value may be substituted ; but the absurd part of the business is, that these wagers frequently exceed in value the article about which the dispute originated. I myself was once present when ten mules, equivalent to 20*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* of our money, which of course is a large sum in Abyssinia, were lost in a dispute between two farmers, as to which had to pay in tribute a small quantity of corn, of the value of a shilling or two. The loser of any of these wagers or forfeits is required to produce a surety for their payment ; and should he be unable to do so, he is imprisoned, or rather chained by the arm to some servant of the chief.

One of the worst points in the Abyssinian character, or, to speak more correctly, in the constitution of their society, is the want of affection among relations, even though they be children of one father. This strange absence of what would appear a natural feeling, is attributable not so much to any coldness of heart innate in the people, as to the custom of a man's having several wives. Hence arise jealousy and dislike among the different families. These animosities, however, do not exist among the offspring of

the same mother and father, any more than in other nations; but as the proportion of *half* brethren is much much greater than that of *own* brethren, fraternal affection is rather a rare thing.

Fitowrari Garr' Amlac had three sons—Desta, Wàssan, and Gosho. Desta and Gosho were children of his *ostensible** wife, while Wàssan was son of a concubine. More or less jealousy had grown up among them from children, till at last, after their father's death, Wàssan, ingratiating himself with Oubi (then lately established in the government of Tigrè), induced him to deprive Desta of the province of Gandafta, which he inherited from his father, and to give it to him. As soon as Oubi left the country on the expedition against Ras Ali, which terminated in his defeat at Devra Tabor, and Balgadda Araia appeared on the stage as pretender to the throne, Desta joined the latter with all his people, and by him was reinstated in the province he had lost, while Wàssan, compelled to seek safety in flight, took sanctuary at Axum.

But things did not long remain in that state. When Oubi appeared on the Taccazy, after his recovery of Simyen, *en route* for Tigrè, the Balgadda retreated before him to Enderta, taking the way of Antichau,† and retired to his stronghold in the mountains.

Wàssan came out from his sanctuary at Axum and encamped for a while in the valley near the source of the brook Assam, above Àdoua. After collecting a considerable body of troops, he marched on Gandafta, anticipating that his brother, overawed by his display of force, would retire, and leave him to take possession quietly. But Desta's character

* By this expression I mean that—perhaps because she was the daughter of some great man—she was considered by him as his wife, though in all probability married only in the slight manner I have alluded to.

† This province then belonged to our countryman Coffin, but subsequently to a Mr. Schimper, a German. When Balgadda Araia passed it on this occasion Coffin gave him forty muskets, which gift was the cause of Oubi's anger towards him and of his country being given to the German.

was one that required more than a mere show to intimidate it, and not having forces equal to Wàssan's he remained in his place at Assaye, a district of his province. Wàssan had not courage to attack him, but encamped a short distance off.

Things being in this state, many persons from among their mutual acquaintances and the priests of the neighbourhood interfered between them, pointing out how disgraceful a thing it was that brothers should be openly at war with each other, and urging them to come to some arrangement, that there might be peace between them. After much entreaty their point was gained, and, moreover, the two mutually agreed that, to whichever of the rival princes fortune should give the throne, the brother who was in favour should protect the other; that, should Oubi gain the day, Wàssan should intercede for Desta, and *vice versâ* if the Balgadda should succeed.

After this agreement the rival camps were pitched near to one another, and the brothers went to and from each other's tents in apparently the greatest friendship. Desta, confiding in the other's good faith, even allowed a great part of his soldiers to return to their homes. But the event showed how little Wàssan deserved such generous confidence; for, no sooner did he perceive that his brother's camp was unprotected, and that he was enjoying himself, feasting and merrymaking in the greatest security, than he collected his men and announced to them that the peace he had made was not from his heart, but was merely a stratagem to throw Desta off his guard. It is but justice to them to relate that from many of his own people arose a murmur of dissatisfaction at this disgraceful treachery. Desta's camp was surrounded, and he taken from the table where he was supping. He was bound, and left in charge of the chief of Zatta, a neighbouring province, who kept him close prisoner on his mountain till the arrival of Oubi. On the return of this Prince, Wàssan went to meet him, and told him what he had done. Oubi congratulated him on his success, and, sending for Desta, ordered that his right hand

should be cut off, and that he should be kept in confinement for the remainder of his life in the mountain fort of Tazzan, in Simyen.

Even under the execution of this cruel sentence, Desta's firmness never deserted him. He told the executioner to be sure that his knife was well sharpened; and then, spreading his fingers, in order that the division of the tendons at the wrist might be more easily made, submitted to the amputation, without allowing his enemies to see, even by the expression of his face, that he suffered any pain. When the hand was severed, he took it up in his left with the utmost coolness, and saying, "See! I have still a hand with which I can cast a lance!" threw it at the chief who presided, and then, with as little hesitation as if about to wash, put the bleeding stump into a vessel of boiling butter, which had been provided for stopping the hemorrhage.

Oubi was cruel enough to propose that Desta's son, a child of nine or ten years old, should suffer a like punishment; but he was overruled by the chiefs, who told him that he had nothing to fear from the lad when he grew up, as, he being only heir to a minor chieftainship, his influence, even if he possessed any, would be at best but local, and not likely to endanger the tranquillity of the throne of Tigre. So his hand was spared; but he was sent to Tazzan with his father, where they have been confined ever since, and where they will probably continue as long as the government of Tigre remains with the Simyen family.

Having thus given the story of Wàssan's treachery to his brother, it is but fair that I should relate an instance of his fidelity to his patron Oubi, and the consequent cruel treatment he suffered at the hands of Dejatch Welda Yessous, that Prince's uncle.

According to some persons, the origin of the quarrel between Welda Yessous and Wàssan was owing to the latter having been preferred to the former by Wazro Simmerate, who afterwards became Wàssan's wife; but I cannot help agreeing with the majority of those with whom I have con-

versed on the subject, that romantic jealousy was far less likely to have been the true cause of Welda Yessous' hate, than that which was asserted as such by Wàssan, and believed by Oubi, namely, that he had refused to become party to a plot, framed by Welda Yessous, for murdering his nephew and taking for himself the government of Tigrè.

It happened that, when Oubi's camp was near Selloa, Wàssan, one day visiting Welda Yessous, was informed* by him of his wicked design, and invited to join in it. From his influence with the Prince, with whom he was a great favourite, he had free access to his presence; and therefore his connivance with the conspirators would have been of the utmost importance to them, and the means he would have had of facilitating their attempt greater perhaps than any other man could command. On his refusing, the Dejasmach proposed to him that, if he had any qualms of conscience on the subject, his hand was not necessary to the deed, nor, in fact, need he take any actual part in the proceedings at the camp, but that his share should be to raise the people of Tigrè, among whom he had considerable influence, not only as son of one of their chieftains, but also from having, in conjunction with his brother, taken great part in the defence of the country against Oubi, when that Prince first appeared as a conqueror and usurper.

But Wàssan's fidelity was equally proof against the temptations offered to him of becoming second man in the kingdom, as against the threats held out in case of his non-compliance. He continued firm to his trust, protesting that Oubi was his greatest friend and benefactor, and that therefore he felt that, so far from conspiring against him, he ought not to hesitate even to lay down his life in his service.

Welda Yessous had not calculated on his proposals being received in this manner, and began to consider in what way to dispose of Wàssan, so as to ensure his not revealing the plot. He pretended that he had been only tempting him, and burst out laughing, exclaiming, "Good! So you thought I was serious, and really meditated evil towards my

nephew ; while, on the contrary, I am he who, of all others, most seeks his welfare, and only wished to try your fidelity, and see if, by your attachment to him, you deserved the high place that you occupy in his esteem and confidence." At the same time, affecting the greatest cordiality and friendship, he invited him to play with him at "goux."

Wàssan knew his man too well to be taken in by these false representations, and, expecting some treachery, would willingly have backed out of the proposed game, but dared not, fearing lest by so doing he might provoke the chief. He therefore preferred running the risk of the danger he suspected, rather than afford Welda Yessous a pretext for openly picking a quarrel. Circumstances occurred at their starting which by no means tended to lessen his suspicions that foul play was designed. The Dejasmatch was attended by eight slaves, all mounted. Wàssan had brought with him ten followers, who, on seeing their master set out, offered to accompany him. But Welda Yessous prevented this, exclaiming, "What needs so many folk? We are going to play, and not to battle!"—at the same time desiring them to repose, and, with the greatest politeness, ordering them to be furnished with plenty of food and drink wherewith to make themselves happy.

Wàssan did not at all approve of these measures ; but, not having any excuse why he should take his people with him, was obliged to yield, and accordingly proceeded, accompanied only by his "gasha-zagry," or shield-bearer. On arriving at a plain, some distance from the camp, but convenient for the manœuvring of horses, they commenced the play. All went on well at the beginning. Welda Yessous threw his staff at Wàssan, who received it on his shield, and returned the compliment ; and so a few passes were made on either side with all appearance of peace and amusement. But this was not the game the Dejasmatch had come for ; so it ended speedily ; for, on his making a signal to his slaves, two of them seized the shield-bearer from behind, and bound him ; while the others, with their master, pursued Wàssan, and, striking him with their staves,

instead of throwing them, as is done in the game, knocked him off his horse, and belaboured him till he was senseless, Welda Yessous then with his own hand emasculated him, thinking probably that he was dead. After which he ordered his slaves to cast the body into a hole, formed by a small cascade, in a neighbouring brook. This done, they returned homewards, carrying with them the shield and clothes of their victim, wrapped up in a bundle, so that they might not be recognised. They informed his servants that, while on the road, he had received a peremptory message from the King, requiring his immediate attendance, and that he had set out for the camp by another road. Welda Yessous, imagining Wàssan to be dead, was rejoiced at having thus satisfied his revenge, and succeeded in getting rid of him; he, in consequence, ordered a good supper, got excessively drunk, and fell asleep on the strength of it. But he had forgotten that there had been a witness to the whole affair: in his excitement and joy at the death of the master, he had never inquired after the shield-bearer. Unluckily for the murderer, this man had contrived to escape while the slaves were busy with his master, and, making the best of his way to the camp, related to some of Oubi's attendants the particulars of the tragedy which had just taken place. These were immediately reported to the Prince, who ordered that instant search should be made for the body, and that it should be brought to his tent as soon as found. Guided by the shield-bearer, a party proceeded to the spot where Wàssan was knocked from his horse, and, thence following the traces of blood to the brook where his assailants had left him, they found the exact place where he had been thrown in, and the footsteps of those who had dragged him, and understood immediately that he had been left there for dead; but still the body was nowhere to be found. After some search, other traces of blood were discovered on the opposite bank, which, being followed up, led them, not, as they anticipated, to the place whither he had been dragged and concealed, but to the chief himself, whom they found alive, though sorely wounded and faint

from loss of blood. He was crawling away on all-fours, and stark naked. It appeared from his story that the water falling over him had brought him to his senses. He then drank ; and, after that, managed to stanch, as well as he might, the blood which flowed copiously from his wounds. Then, fearing lest some of his intended murderers might return and finish their deed more completely, he dragged himself away, in the hope of being able to reach some hut or village. His servants procured a stretcher, and, having covered him with a garment, carried him to Oubi, to whom he related the cause of his ill-treatment, asserting it to have been his refusal to join in the conspiracy against him. Meanwhile Welda Yéssous was eating, drinking, and sleeping away, in happy ignorance of all these events. In the morning, however, he was awakened early by a confidential servant, who came to him bearing the dreadful news that Wásson was alive, and in the camp of Oubi. Welda Yéssous was startled by this sudden and unexpected communication ; but, in order not to be taken unawares, he desired his men to be ready, and, putting on his belt and sword, remained prepared either to fly, or to fight if brought to bay. But in his nephew he had a man who was more than even *his* match in cunning and diplomacy.

Oubi knew well the danger of openly attacking so determined a warrior and powerful a chieftain as his uncle, and accordingly allowed no hostile preparations or demonstrations of any kind to be made about his camp. His plan for taking him was, in fact, similar to that which Welda Yéssous himself had used towards Wásson. Oubi sent a messenger to him, politely requesting his attendance, as if to a feast. Welda Yéssous, judging the meaning of this, endeavoured to excuse himself on account of sickness ; but messenger succeeding messenger, he determined to go, and accordingly set out, accompanied by a large body of his soldiery. Their arrival being reported to the Prince, he inquired what was the meaning of the troops ? Welda Yéssous answered that they had come to remind him of their services by going through the "foukera," or war-boast.

Oubi thanked him, but at the same time dispensed with this ceremony, saying that on the present occasion great men only were admitted, but no servants or common soldiery.

For some time Welda Yessous refused to enter alone, till at length he was persuaded to do so by some of his friends among the principal of Oubi's chiefs. Whether they guaranteed his safety I know not, but possibly so, as this has been more than once done on similar occasions. However he went in, and was courteously received by his nephew, who desired him to be seated. He complied, placing himself on the floor, near Oubi's couch. Mead was served, and all seemed to be going on well. Oubi, knowing his uncle's character, and fearing lest, if rendered desperate, he might offer him violence, was prepared in every way against such an occurrence. His shield hung on a peg near him, and a sword lay on his couch convenient to his hand. Beside all these precautions, he had taken the still greater one of determining not in any way to enter personally into the question; so he continued to speak politely to his uncle on everyday occurrences, till an officer opposite, standing up, said "Dejatch Welda Yessous, I have a matter with you, to be tried before the King." Welda Yessous answered that he was at all times ready to be tried, but that he wished to know what was the matter of which he was accused. The courtier replied that, according to custom, he must first find bail for his appearance to be tried when called upon. Welda Yessous applied to those present to become security, but all, knowing what were the wishes of their master, declined. The Dejasmach called on each one of his friends by name, reproaching them for their backwardness to assist him; but some were silent, and some flatly refused him. The laws of Abyssinia require that, if a man summoned for trial should be unable to find bail, he shall be bound. So Welda Yessous was completely entrapped, and was seized and bound before he was well aware of what was about to be done, or had recovered from the surprise which he felt at this roundabout way of proceeding. He struggled as well as he could, passionately insulting his captors, and

upbraiding them that their conduct was more like that of women than of warriors ; that had he been free, and on the field, they could not all together have done by fair fight what they had thus treacherously achieved. He was kept imprisoned for three or four months, Oubi being undecided in what manner to treat him. When, however, he camped at Mai Ainy, feeling that his prisoner was a burden to him, and fearing to leave him, lest escaping he should occasion much trouble by exciting the people to revolt, he called together his chief men, and took counsel with them as to what they should do with him. Belladta Darraso gave the most cruel advice of any, urging that to cut off his hand or foot was not sufficient to prevent his fighting against them ; that to kill him outright would, it was true, make an end of him, but that such punishment would be too lenient : and besides, that they who condemned him to death would doubtless be rendered accountable for the long list of unrepented sins which might be written against him ; "So," said he, "I advise that his life be spared, but that it be rendered one of wretchedness and misery." Accordingly he suggested that his eyes should be put out. Oubi, willing to spare himself the opprobrium of such an act, handed his uncle over entirely to Belladta Darraso and Shelika Billé, empowering them to act towards him as they should consider fit and proper. So they took him, and, having bound him hand and foot, threw him backwards on the ground, and fastened his hands and feet to posts driven into the floor. One of the legs of the "arat" or couch on which his judges were seated was placed on his chest, and the executioner proceeded in his presence to heat the blade of the knife with which he was about to operate. These horrible preparations were the last sights he was ever doomed to see ; as soon as the blade was red-hot the executioner passed the edge round each eyeball.

Oubi afterwards granted him a small territory for his maintenance in food and clothing. His temper does not seem to be much humbled nor his disposition much improved by the loss of his vision. Once, lately, he killed an

old and very faithful servant on the following slight provocation. The poor man was waiting on him, and serving him some broiled meat ; the chief complained that it was not sufficiently cooked, and expressed his astonishment that such should be the case, seeing that he had made a similar complaint on the preceding day. The servant replied that it really was done, but that, being juicy, his taste deceived him, and his want of sight prevented his detecting the error. "So you laugh at me, as well as deceive me, because I am blind!" shouted Welda Yessous : and, at the same time striking upwards with the knife with which he was eating, he stabbed the poor man in the stomach, inflicting so severe a wound that he died in a few hours.

His appetite also is wonderful, amounting to a disease, to which, it appears, most of the elder branches of the family are subject. I should be sorry to repeat the stories I have heard of *whole lambs* eaten by Welda Yessous and Lidge Astrat, as appetizers for the dinner of raw beef which was to follow, for I fear I should be considered as dealing in marvels even beyond the established right of a traveller.

I know many other instances of cruelty which would show that this vice does not belong only to great tyrants, but may be found to be exercised equally by men of the lowest degree. One, in particular, might be taken as an example—though, of course, an unusually severe one—of the treatment to which the peasantry of Tigrè are often subjected from the lawless troops of Amhàra soldiery which are constantly billeted among them. It happened near Hamlo, and was related to me by the sufferer himself.

Two soldiers had been quartered at his house for a considerable time, eating and drinking at his expense, and wasting his substance in every possible way. One day, among other things, they demanded of him a large quantity of ghee (melted butter). He furnished them with as much as he could, and, on their requiring more, assured them that what he had already supplied was all that he had it in his power to give them. Doubting his word, they commenced a search through the premises, and at last found a small jar,

carefully closed and stowed away in a snug corner. On this they accused him of lying, and attempting to starve them ; but he declared that the butter was not his own, having been left in his care by such a one, and offering to produce witnesses to the fact ; adding that, as the concealed butter was so small in quantity compared with what they had received from him, they might be sure that, had it been his, it would not have been worth his while to keep it back and at the same time give up so much. But they would listen to none of his excuses ; they knocked him down, and, having beaten him till he was senseless, stripped him, and then, taking the pestle of his own "foundouk," tied him to it, and put him to roast before a large fire, basting him with the disputed butter. However, whether intentionally or from idleness, they forgot to turn their roast, and in consequence the man was terribly burnt on one side, while the other remained uninjured. When I saw the poor fellow he had nearly recovered, though, judging from the fearful scar which he showed me all down his right side, his cure must have been nearly miraculous. He had just returned from the camp, whither he had been to lay his grievances before Oubi.

I must say for this Prince that he seldom refuses justice to the oppressed among his subjects ; and one might almost term him a just ruler, were it not for sundry little mistakes he has made where his own interest was concerned. On this occasion he found means both for making amends to the peasant and punishing the soldiers, for he made over to him the whole of their property as a compensation, while, to satisfy the demands of justice, he took each of their right hands. The poor man's compensation consisted of two horses, two mules, some cows and sheep, the soldiers' arms, and a little ready money besides.

But of all the many species of barbarity that I have ever heard of, either in Abyssinia or elsewhere, none I think can surpass in cold-bloodedness the following cases of treacherous murder which occurred in the expedition against the Barea, north of Addy Abo.

Shortly after his return to Tigrè, Oubi, being seated one day in his tent, heard some one outside calling aloud to him for his protection, or rather for justice. On ordering the suppliant to be admitted, an old woman was brought before him. The poor creature, as soon as she found herself in his presence, cast herself on the ground at his feet, and weeping, demanded at his hands the blood of her only son, who had been killed in the Barea country—not, she said, by the enemy, for then he would have fallen in his duty, but murdered by his own comrade (a soldier whose name she mentioned), who had slain him in order thus to obtain from an unsuspecting friend *the trophies* which he had not the prowess to gain in battle from the foe—trophies which he presented before his chiefs as proofs of his valour !

Of course she was required to substantiate this serious charge ; and accordingly the case was tried and witnesses were brought, being some of the soldiers who had informed her of the fact. The guilt of the accused party was clearly proved before the Dejasmach, who then, addressing the old woman, said to her, “ My good mother, it is true that your son has been most cruelly and treacherously murdered, and that you have a right to demand blood for blood of him that slew him ; but you are old and poor, and now since the death of your child have no one to support you. Of what benefit will this man’s blood be to you ? Let him rather ransom his life with a sum of money (I believe 150 dollars was named), which will be riches for you, and will in a measure serve to compensate you for the loss you have sustained.”

So spoke Oubi, only to try the woman, for he would probably not have spared the man, even had she consented ; but he wished to see whether her appeal to him was prompted by true regret for her son, or by the hope of gaining by his death. If he anticipated the latter, the old woman’s answer disappointed him. “ Never shall it be said,” she exclaimed with indignation, “ that my only son fed me while he lived, and that I ate his blood after his death.”

"I applaud your determination," answered Oubi, "and consent to the murderer's death. But you have no relations here: will you kill him yourself?" "If I cannot kill him myself, God will find some one to revenge me," was the determined old woman's reply.

To explain this, be it known that the custom and law of Abyssinia is, that a murderer when convicted is given up to the relations of his victim, of whom the nearest of kin puts him to death with the same kind of weapon as that with which he had slain their relative.

After endeavouring ineffectually to shake her purpose by increasing the amount of ransom offered, Oubi consented that she should send to a neighbouring village where she had some distant relatives. Accordingly in a day or two a countryman arrived to take the office of executioner. He was a very clumsy clown; and on the prisoner being laid before him, trussed up in a heap, instead of killing him quietly and delicately, he began to stamp and strut about his Doumfâter, or boast, dancing and parading, as if about to do battle with an enemy superior in force, and screaming forth his valour in the most extravagant terms; he killed the soldier, but not until he had inflicted seven lance-wounds in his back, body, and throat. The sight was most disgusting, and all present hooted the lout, though none pitied the sufferer, on account of the horrible nature of the crime which he expiated. As for the old woman, Oubi behaved most generously towards her, making over to her the whole of the soldier's property as well as the sum he had offered to ransom him.

Another murder, similar to this, was attempted in the same expedition; but the perpetrator of it met with his punishment on the spot. Two men were out in the forest together—the one a soldier, the other his servant, a lad of about 19, who carried his shield. The Devil appeared to the former in the shape of Vanity, and by working up in his mind visions of glory, which he had never been able to realize in battle, tempted him to murder his fellow. He yielded, and struck him from behind with his lance. The

wound was not mortal ; nor indeed does it appear from the sequel to have been of much importance. The servant, finding himself wounded, guessed the horrible intention of his master, and began to implore him. "My master," said the poor fellow, "I have served you with all fidelity from a boy up to the present time, now seven years ; during all which period I have never received nor asked of you any wages, but only the morsel I eat and the rags I wear ; and will you now kill me ?"

"My good lad," coolly replied the miscreant, "what you state is perfectly true : your services have been exemplary, but as yet are incomplete. To have served me faithfully for seven years is considerable credit to you ; but it will be still more honourable to your memory that by your death you should be the means of procuring for me much renown, and perhaps (who knows?) seven shoumat (villages to govern)." Thus saying he struck the boy on the head with his club, and stunned him ; and then, to make matters certain, stabbed him through the neck with his lance. After this the good man, imagining that his work was complete, proceeded with the utmost deliberation and in the most scientific manner to possess himself of the coveted trophy ; which operation having been successfully performed, he returned to the camp by a circuitous route. There he related how he had been attacked, when in a distant part of the forest, by fearful odds ; how his poor and faithful follower had been slain, fighting in the most gallant manner ; while he himself, after killing one of the enemy, succeeded in putting the remainder to flight ; at the same time showing, as proofs of the reality of his story, marks on his sword and shield, which, like our equally valorous friend Sir John Falstaff, he had himself hacked with his knife ; or rather, the sword with the lance, and the shield with the sword.

But "murder will out ;" and unfortunately for him some of his hearers, either from curiosity or discrediting his tale, proposed to return to the scene of action, and asked him to guide them thither. He refused flatly, saying that the spot was a long way off ; that he was fatigued ; and besides,

that the enemy, who had fled, would no doubt carry the news of their comrade's death to their fellows, and return in force to recover the body, and if possible to avenge his death.

By such arguments as this he succeeded in dissuading the more timorous of the party from carrying out their proposal; but others, either less credulous or more courageous than the rest, determined privately to retrace his steps and discover the truth of the matter. Among them were some friends of the murdered lad. Accordingly, leaving the camp on some pretext, they set out in the direction by which he had returned, and after wandering about in the forest for a considerable time—now losing the track, now regaining it—were about to return to their homes in despair, when a cry of surprise from one of the party (which had separated in seeking the trail) called the attention of the rest to the object before him. Their horror and astonishment can be more easily understood than described when they beheld, at a short distance, the unfortunate lad dragging his mutilated body in the direction of the camp, and now, on beholding them, imploring, in a scarcely audible voice, their assistance and a draught of water. His thirst being in a measure satiated, they proceeded to carry him homewards, and managed, moreover, to give private notice to Oubi of what had occurred.

Oubi, on hearing the story, and seeing the poor fellow's condition, directed that he should be carefully attended to, and gave the strictest orders to all acquainted with the affair that it should be kept a profound secret. The boy, notwithstanding the number and magnitude of his wounds, lived; and a short time after the occurrence, the soldiers being about to go through their boast and tell their deeds ("count their coups," as it would be called in the North American phraseology), Oubi concealed the patient under some drapery behind his couch, in the very place where were the ornaments and other gifts intended for those who had distinguished themselves.

At length came the turn of our Abyssinian Falstaff. He

fully declared himself by name and descent, enumerated his services, talked of his valour, and ended by casting at the Prince's feet the trophy he had torn from his victim. Oubi, turning half round, put forth his hand, as if to reach some suitable gift for so brave a warrior—probably nothing less than a silver bitoa, or bracelet.

Our hero, filled with joy and pride, sank on his knees before his master to receive the expected mark of his favour. "Never fear: *you my brother*,"* said Oubi, with his peculiar sardonic smile. "Never fear: I love to reward my brave followers according to their merits;" and drawing back the curtain presented to his expectant gaze the emaciated form of his servant.

The soldier made a sort of movement, as if to rise from his kneeling posture, but it would appear that his legs failed him from terror, for he staggered, and would have fallen back had not the servants of Oubi, at a signal from their master, saved him the trouble by throwing him on his back and binding him hand and foot. Oubi meanwhile had never ceased to smile, and to regard the culprit with the most amiably complacent expression of features.

When the man was bound he thus addressed him:—"My brave fellow, what greater reward can I offer you for your gallantry than to restore alive to you that dear faithful lad whom you treated with so much affection, in whose defence you fought so valiantly, and whom you mourned as dead!" Then turning to the servant, he said—"My poor lad, go and embrace your kind master!" The boy crawled up to the spot where the prisoner lay bound, and picked up his lance which lay beside him. Not having strength to strike with it he took it in both hands, near the head, and, placing the point on his master's stomach, endeavoured, by leaning all his weight on it, to force the spear into him—not at once, as a lance-stroke, but working it in by slow degrees, like an awl, till he succeeded, after considerable labour, in making

* These words, when used by Oubi to a common soldier, are generally forerunners of anything but agreeable consequences.

a wound of some depth, and then fell fainting over his victim from sheer exhaustion. No description of the contortions of the sufferer, nor of his yells till he was gagged, need be added to this already too horrible story. By Oubi's order the senseless executioner was removed, and a lance thrust downwards obliquely through the prisoner's throat ended his sufferings.

Another Abyssinian killed in a similar manner, and for similar purposes, one of the Arab allies, followers of Nimmer, the Jâly chief. His excuse was, that the similarity of costume and weapons of this people and the hostile Bâza had led to the mistake; but the Arabs claimed his blood, and, the crime being proved against him, Oubi gave him over to their tender mercies. His punishment was most summary. Before they had left the presence of the Prince, one of the relations of the deceased drawing his heavy two-edged broad-sword cut the culprit through with one blow; and turning to Oubi, said, in Arabic, "May God lengthen your life, oh my master!"—just as he would have done had he received a present from his hands; and then, picking up a wisp of grass from the floor, walked away, wiping his blade with as much *sang froid* as if nothing had occurred.

Oubi is said to have expressed much admiration at the manly off-hand way in which this was executed, as well as at the wonderful display of swordsmanship;—wonderful indeed compared with that of his people, who, partly from the shape of their sword-hilts, and partly from the quality of their blades, can scarcely ever inflict a serious wound.

I know from very good authority that the facts of the Arab being murdered and the subsequent execution of the criminal are true, though I was not present when it occurred. It was related to me that the man was cut completely through the waist; but though I do not dispute the fact, I do not wish any of my readers, who think such a feat impossible, to believe it in the present instance. I have known for certain of the same feat being performed by

Turks with their crooked sabres,* but never by an Arab with his straight sword, though they can occasionally administer good downright blows:—witness the cannon which is kept at L'Obeyd, in Kordofan, the notch on which is evidence of the strength of arm and temper of blade of the Darfoury eunuch.

I dare say that from the first part of the chapter some of my readers may have anticipated that I was about to show off the Abyssinians as combinations of everything that was good and laudable, and in consequence may have been disappointed in the result. On the contrary, fearing lest the character I was about to give of them might be considered harsh, if understood to be applied to the nation in general, I thought necessary to preface it, in order to point out that the opinion one may form of a people from a few glaring instances of crime, or even from some deeds of an opposite nature, whether of valour or benevolence, ought not to be criterions of the entire nation. I should say of the Amhàra soldiers, and frequently of the townis-

* When Ahmed Pacha Meniklî conquered the rebellious (or rather *patriotic*) tribes of Taka, he collected some thirty or forty chiefs and men of note, and marched them off prisoners, to be butchered in the market-place of El Khartoum. Many of them, either from obstinacy or fatigue, halted on the march, refusing to proceed any further. Sulimàn Cashif, who commanded the escort, having orders that all such should be put to death on the spot, is said to have practised his swordsmanship on them by cutting them through the waist as they stood. My friend, Moussa Bey, in the same expedition, unintentionally cut a horse's head clean off. He was in command of an expedition, composed partly of Shàgeya (Arab) horsemen. Meeting with a very strong force of the enemy, some of his soldiers began to show symptoms of panic, and, the fight becoming disagreeably hot, the Shàgeya, either from treachery or nervousness, wavered. Moussa Bey, seeing one of them turn his horse's head, and make off for the jungle, determined to check so dangerous an example by summary means, and so gave chase to the fugitive. Being better mounted, he soon came up with him; but the Arab, not liking his appearance as he stood up in his stirrups with his nasty little crooked olive-brown blade, ready for a back stroke, threw his horse suddenly back on to his haunches, and dropped off: the horse's head went up just in time to receive the blow that was aimed at his master—the man got away among the bushes. I know plenty more such anecdotes.

people who have had much intercourse with them, that they are for the most part excessively vain. This is their chief and besetting sin. They are also rather cowardly, very deceitful and treacherous, grasping and covetous, vicious, debauched, and thievish. While as to the peasantry, of whom the ordinary traveller sees little and hears less, though they form the majority of the nation, I should say that, barring ignorance and poverty, they have as few sins or vices to be laid to their charge as any people under the sun. I am speaking of the Tigrèans. I know little of the Amhàras except the soldiery, of whom I have just spoken in no very flattering terms.

The Abyssinians in general are patronizingly condescending towards their inferiors, and rather disposed to be servile when in the presence of a superior. They are at all times overflowing with complimentary speeches, which, however, must not always be taken as proceeding from the heart. The soldiers in their manners are as much given to ceremony as any one, with much less sincerity. A soldier, sent perhaps on a message to you from some chief, will approach your room with the greatest possible appearance of respect. He will enter with his shoulders bare, and, as if feeling bashful before so much greatness, will remain for a few moments by the door, bowing low to your repeated salutations, and your requests that he will be seated. At last, as if having gained confidence, he will inform you, after approaching a few steps, that his master, Mr. So-and-so, sends you his compliments and "Good morning. How are ye since I saw ye? How are ye? How are ye? Very much." To this, on your answering "God be praised," he will make another bow, and remain where he is. Perhaps, after a while, he will consent to be seated, with much show of disinclination to take such a liberty. Then again he will rise and approach you a few steps, and deliver some other complimentary message from his master. This time he will seat himself near your couch without being asked. He will soon, however, rise again, and tell you in a confidential whisper behind the corner of his cloth what was the real purport of his coming: probably

such as this—"Mr. So-and-so, my master, sent me to you, and desired me to say, How are ye (&c. &c. &c., *ad infinitum*), and to give you *this*." On which he, with the greatest mystery, pulls out from under his garment a very small jar of honey, which his respectable master had possibly filched from some old woman for the occasion.

But although I said that this was the *real purport* of his mission, I was wrong; it was only the ostensible one. This business, however, being transacted, he will advance still a trifle further both in his impudence and in a nearer approach to your seat, till, if by your manner he think that he has gained favour in your sight—that is to say, if you be anything but stiffly courteous to him—it's ten to one if it won't end in his dropping accidentally on to the edge of your couch, and at last sitting comfortably alongside of you. Then, all his humility disappearing, he will arrange his garments as pleases him best, and, making himself perfectly at home, tell you stories of his own and his master's greatness, and of their particular attachment to you. Rising at last, when either your "tedge" is all drunk or your society no longer agreeable, he reassumes for a moment his mock humility, and, taking leave of you, begs you to give him a "balderabba," or, as I have before explained, to name from among your servants one who shall be his friend and spokesman whenever he may need to address you. To him he confides his secret—the *true* motive of his visit; and it becomes his balderabba's duty to hint to you when you ask him, that your friend Goetana Ita So-and-so, from who you have just received a shilling's worth of honey (which cost him nothing), is very much in want of a piece of velvet, or a muslin turban, or perhaps both. At any rate, if the value of what is expected as a return for the offering do not exceed what you have received by more than its double, you may consider yourself lucky, and your friend a very disinterested man.

Talking about this trick of begging, I remember that while I was staying at Tokhulimny a man from the neighbourhood, with whom indeed I was not at all acquainted, brought me as

a gift a jar of honey and some cakes of bread (*hansa*), and I, happening at the moment to be in want of both of these articles, accepted them with many thanks. Shortly after, I sent the man in return a present of about twice their value, taking them at the highest estimation. He sent back the money, saying that he had not brought the articles to sell, but as a gift. I replied, that what I had returned him was not as payment, but as a reciprocity of good will, and that, as he did not choose to take it, I was doubly obliged for his (as I thought) disinterested generosity. My servant who bore this message came back, telling me that I was altogether wrong; that the man had denied any such liberal intentions; and that the meaning of this message was simply that I had not sent enough. Willing in all things to make myself agreeable, I again sent him the money, having added to it some article of trifling value, but much esteemed in the country. The man was still dissatisfied, and returned it a second time, with a rather impertinent message about his being a great man, and that as such he expected a great present. Already tired of the fool's importunity, I sent him his honey and bread, telling him, with my respects, that I knew nothing of him but from his gift; that had he sent me a fine horse, a silver-mounted shield, or a lion's skin, as other chiefs had done, I should have returned him a present from my own country of proportionate value; but judging by his offering that he was a rather poor peasant, I had chosen, as I thought, the best manner of remunerating him. I moreover begged that for the future both he and his presents might be kept as far as convenient from my neighbourhood. In this last, however, he did not obey me; for that very same evening he came himself, entreating me to receive his gift, assuring me that it was all a mistake, and that he should be very well satisfied with what I had at first offered him. I declined this arrangement, telling him, as was the fact, that I had sworn by the death of Shétou that I would not receive it: at the same time I expressed the greatest friendship for him; and the affair ended in my accepting a small pair of tweezers for extracting thorns, and in his carrying away, as a proof of my

esteem and love, a small *papier maché* snuffbox, with looking-glass lid, value 2*l.*, or thereabouts.

Some instructions which the Royal Geographical Society formerly published to assist travellers, by pointing out objects most worthy of their inquiries and remarks, directed especial notice to reports or facts connected with cannibalism. On this point I have little to say in respect of the Abyssinians. What follows is all that I have ever heard on the subject.

A great lady, now living in Gondar, is said to use either the blood or flesh of young children as medicine for a complaint from which she suffers. This story is so generally believed and reported all over Abyssinia that I should fear there must be at least some foundation for it. Several children are said to have been missing from time to time; but so cleverly were they kidnapped that suspicion could only suggest what had been their fate. At length a soldier of some note, living near to the house of this lady, missed his daughter, a little girl about six years old. He had last seen her playing with some other children, and, on inquiring of them, found that she had been enticed away from them into the suspected house. In his love for the child, forgetting the influence of the proprietress, who was a member of the greatest family in the land, the father burst open the door, and, rushing in, drew his sword, and threatened the females whom he met that he would kill them if his child were not produced. After a time she was brought to him from an inner room. The woman who restored her to him declared that she had strayed in of her own accord, and affected great astonishment at his haste and passion, asking what he feared for the girl. She, however, in tears and the greatest alarm, declared that she had been hung up by the legs.

This is one way in which I have heard the story related, while another informant assured me that the man had rushed in, and found the child actually hanging and senseless. The people of the country assert that the object of the hanging was to collect the blood, which was intended to be used medicinally.

A man who had been taken for robbery and murder con-

fessed, previous to his execution, that he had murdered at different times nine men and a nun, and had tasted the flesh of one of the men. His body was refused burial, and was thrown out to the wild beasts.

A servant of mine related to me that two soldiers came one evening to his country (a province in Amhàra) and stole two small children, and put them into sacks. A lad who was near them, seeing this, ran into the village, and related what had happened to his comrades. The soldiers were pursued, and, owing to their loads, would have been overtaken, had they not, perceiving their danger, dropped their booty, sacks and all, and made off as quickly as possible. It is supposed that the children were intended as medicine for Maro Warreynia, a Galla by origin, and chief in the neighbourhood where the attempted robbery took place, and who was suffering from dysentery.

For the Abyssinians I must say that neither the former nor the latter of these tales affect their character at all; as, though now living and ruling in Abyssinia, the family of Ras Gouxa, to which both the lady (whose name by the way is Gouxa Herrùt) and the chieftain Mào belong, is not Abyssinian, but imported from a Galla country, called Yedjo.

Some people state that the flesh of these little victims is not eaten itself by the patient, but is used as food for sheep, whose flesh, thus fattened, becomes medicinal. The accounts of the manner in which the herbivorous animal is induced to partake of such unnatural diet are two. Some say that the flesh is dried and powdered, and then mixed with the sheep's ordinary food; while others say that the poor creatures are crammed with human flesh as we cram turkeys. A child, led three times round a woman who is troubled with the flux, and then butchered, is, I have been told, considered a sure remedy.

As regards the truth of these stories, of course no one can vouch for it; but of the *probability* of such extraordinary remedies being employed, and even considered efficacious, I cannot doubt, having myself witnessed many practices equally absurd. I believe there is no question that in some parts of

Abyssinia (Walkayt and Waldabba) the flesh of men slain in battle is preserved, dried, and powdered, to be used in cases of sores ; and I have heard that if, during an interval when no battles have occurred, there should arise a scarcity of the article, a bit or two may be occasionally procured from the tomb of some one who has died a natural death.

A man of my acquaintance, and in whose word I should be inclined to place confidence, told me that when quite a boy he had lived at Waldabba, and that, while there, his friends had always forbidden his straying far from the houses about the season of St. John's Day. This anniversary, as we have shown in a former chapter, is the great day for the casting out of devils, and curing of diseases otherwise incurable. It will also be remembered that an animal led round the patient, and then slaughtered as an offering, forms a part of the ceremony.

As for the case of the murderer who had tasted human flesh, no one will, I suppose, care to question that fact, as all my readers must have heard that shipwrecked seamen and others have been obliged to eat it. "This," they will say, "was of necessity ; but why did your Abyssinian ruffian do it? Was it from hunger?" To this question I could answer "I don't know ; but perhaps it was from curiosity." If such a motive should be deemed improbable, I have only to add that I can bring evidence of its having occurred without going so far as Abyssinia ; for I have often heard a friend of mine tell how, in his younger days, he and some fellow students of medicine in France partook, from curiosity, of some "*cotelettes de dragon* !" cut from a poor soldier who had died in a hospital from wounds received in a riot at Lyons.

Incest is looked upon by the Abyssinians in its proper light. Few are the instances which are to be heard of its occurrence. I only remember two or three ; and in these the heinousness of the crime seems to have made such an impression on the feelings of the guilty persons as to have led them to confess their sin publicly, fearing less the reproach

of the world than the more penetrating "still small voice" of conscience.

* * * * *

Thus much I have related as illustrating the character of the Abyssinians.

"Why have you not said anything on its good points?" may be asked. I answer, because anecdotes of benevolence, justice, fidelity, &c., are rarely interesting enough either to become topics of conversation where they happen, or to amuse an English public.

One more remark. On reconsidering this chapter, I find that, with the exception of Wàssan, nearly all the heroes of the above anecdotes are either Amhàras or Gallas; and this again, though it speaks very little in favour of my having stuck to my subject of describing Tigrè and its people, speaks highly of the nation I intended to describe.

CHAPTER XXIX.

GOVERNMENT, LAWS, &c.

WHILE in Abyssinia I collected a good deal of information on these interesting subjects: my papers on them, however, shared in the loss I sustained; and, from their being of a nature not so easily remembered as ceremonies which one has witnessed, and such-like striking occurrences, my memory and the few scanty notes which I retained have assisted me less perhaps in this than in any other part of the work, always excepting geography.

I need not enter much into the general divisions of Abyssinia. These particulars have been brought before the public by other writers, and even may have been gleaned by some of those who have plodded thus far through these volumes.

Suffice it, then, to say, that the formerly vast empire of Æthiopia, whose influence extended from Sennaar and Tàka southward to the other side of the Galla countries (no one, I believe, knows exactly how far), and from nearly the White Nile to the Red Sea in longitude, consists now of several independent kingdoms or principalities. Three of these may be called Abyssinian, being inhabited for the most part by Christians. The first is the Amhàra country, lying west of the Taccazy, and extending from that river to the independent Shangalla or negro tribes, and from the frontiers of the Galla country, formed by the Abbai or Blue Nile, which there runs in a westerly direction, to the Atbara, a torrent which forms a sort of boundary between the Amhàra provinces and those of some Arab tribes belonging to the former kingdom of Sennaar, now conquered

by the Turks, and considered as a province under the Pashalik of Egypt.

The second Abyssinian country is called Tigrè, although, like its neighbours, it takes this name from a small province in the kingdom, which alone is properly so called. Tigrè is contiguous to the Amhàra country, lying to the east of it, and divided from it by the river Taccazy. Its natural eastern frontier is the Red Sea. To the north it is separated from the Nubian or Sennàry provinces by a number of small independent tribes,—as the Bàzas, Bidèles, Habhabs, Boghos, Tsada Coustans, &c. ; while on the south are the Azobo and other Galla tribes.

The third country is called Shoa, and is entirely detached from the other two, lying to the south of them, and being separated from them by the Azobos, Wollos, and other Gallas before mentioned. It is surrounded on all sides by more or less independent tribes,—as the Adaiels, Somaulis, &c., to the eastward, and the Gallas to the west and south-west.

The language of Tigrè resembling very nearly the Giz or ancient Æthiopian, of which it is, in fact, a dialect, would lead one to suppose that it is the most ancient, and perhaps the original spoken language of the country. The people of Shoa and the Amhàras use in common the Amhàric language, which would appear to be of more recent date, having only a few roots from the Giz.

The remainder of what was Æthiopia is made up of the Galla and negro tribes above mentioned.

These may be considered as the natural geographical divisions of the country, and also as those most generally adopted in common conversation. Properly speaking, all that I have mentioned as west of the Taccazy ought not to be regarded as Amhàra ; for we have the provinces formerly governed by the chief of Simyen, and at that time dependent on the ruler of the Amhàras ; but now, since the petty chieftains of Simyen have added the kingdom of Tigrè to their government, under the rule of Oubi, their original possessions have of course become, politically speaking,

attached to their newly acquired territory. From Tigrè also, as we have allotted it, should be taken the strip of land along the Red Sea, which is under the rule, or rather protection, of the Sublime Porte.

These considerations, however, have little to do with our present subject. Only remembering always that no Prince, however powerful, would venture to arrogate to himself the title of Emperor of Abyssinia—a right belonging only to the lineal descendants of Solomon the Great, it will be understood that the titles of Ras (head or chief), as used by the actual sovereigns of Amhàra and Shoa, and of Dejasmach, which is all that Oubi pretends to, mean nothing whatever in regard to the power exercised by these princes. Dejasmach, or (as it is more commonly called when coupled with a name) Dejatch Oubi, has a score of subjects, including his own sons, who have the same nominal rank as himself. As regards his true station, it is that of absolute ruler of a feudal kingdom.

The whole of Tigrè is divided into provinces, or shoumàt. Some of the smaller of these are held on particular tenures, being “goult,” or, as it were, free gifts from some king to the Church, or occasionally to private individuals, and free from taxation. The remainder are held by chieftains, some of whom are hereditary, others chosen by the sovereign from among his followers, and all of these latter pay regular tribute or tax to the government.

Formerly, in the times of the empire, there was greater regularity in the partition of this kingdom, which then consisted of forty-four counties or provinces, called in the Tigrè language “addý negarit,” or drum countries, as they conferred on their chief the right of having a band of drums beating before him when he went in procession, on a march, or to battle. The rank of “bàl negarit,” or owner of drums, confers the same privileges and the same station as that of Dejasmach, the title only being wanting. Most of the drum countries were or are held by chiefs of this latter rank; a few only are not so: but this does not imply that their governors are a whit inferior to the others. The

chiefs of Agami, Selloa, Agow, &c., beat the drums as loud as any one, and hold as high a place either in feast or field.

In speaking of these chiefs it is usual to prefix the name of their province to their own as a distinction, thus—"Shoum Agami Weld' Inchaël (chief of Agami Weld' Inchaël); Shoum Selloa Remha," &c. Now another lesser chieftain would be termed as simple Mr. Weldo Selassy, or whatever his name might be; and if it were thought necessary in speaking of him to explain that he was chief of such a country, it would be done thus—Mr. So-and-so, Chief of Antichau, &c.

As for Shoum Agami Weld' Inchaël, he was superior to most Dejasmatches, for he was son of Sabagardis, King of Tigre.

These provinces are subdivided into lesser ones, whose governors are dependent on the great chiefs, and hold rank according to the size of their territory. At the present time there are only seventeen "addy negarits" remaining in Tigre; the rest have been cut up and apportioned out to soldiers.

Some of the smaller "shoumât" are called "addy ambilta," or "cunda," according to which of the two kinds of music their chief has a right: or "farrasseynia," if they be given up to a parcel of soldiers. A few are called "waizero," and belong to the ancient nobility of the country.

When the King presents a man to a government, the gift is proclaimed by "owaje," or beating of drums in the camp, and also in the market-place of the capital. For these purposes, as well as for any other proclamations, a big drum is kept expressly in each of these places. If the gift be of a large province, such as we have just described, the ceremony of proclamation would be something as follows:—The drummer, having collected a crowd by striking his instrument, and waving a stick or sheepskin over his head, declares in a loud voice that he has received the King's orders to proclaim the gift of such and such a country, from such a place to such another place (naming the boundaries),

to Mr. Such-a-one, to be held by him to its chief, with right to govern it, exercise his authority, and punish offenders by imprisonment and flogging—cutting off the hand or feet, and death, being properly speaking, referred to Oubi.

The taxes required by Oubi are of two kinds, one, called “werky,” of ready money (that is to say, pieces of cloth, which pass for coinage or their value in dollars), and the other, called “fessassy,” of corn. Besides these, the chieftain pays annually a “mashomia” or acknowledgment, which is a gift of cattle, honey, butter, arms, or anything else of value, as a sort of tenure by which he holds his land.

Every province, whether great or small, is subdivided into parishes or villages, over each of which is a “chikka” or taxgatherer. Now, to show how these men as well as their masters support themselves from the province, we will suppose that a tax of a thousand cloths is to be raised from a district containing ten equally-sized villages. Of course each “chikka” would have to produce a hundred. By cleverly arranging his accounts and the distribution of the tribute, the taxgatherer, in lieu of his proper number, collects perhaps a hundred and fifty. Of the extra fifty, a lion’s share, say thirty, is put aside for the chief, while the remaining twenty are kept by the “chikka” and “toquotatary” or accountant, as their remuneration. The chief would thus gain by this little transaction three hundred pieces of cloth. Similarly he gains on the corn tribute and “mashomia.” This latter is collected in quantities from the people, about St. John’s Day and at Mascal. When the chief pays his annual visit of duty to the King he carries with him what he has selected from the mass, and leaves the remainder behind in his private store.

The governors of provinces have also a certain quantity of the cultivable land of each parish, which from time immemorial has been set apart for their use. This land a governor may employ at his pleasure; either he may keep it in his own hands, or he may let it. If he prefer the

former, then he has a right to call upon the people for their labour; he can demand of them one day's work at the clearing and ploughing, one day for sowing, two for clearing the crop of weeds, and two for gathering in the harvest.

When I speak of letting the land, I do not mean exactly after our manner of receiving a fixed rent; for though this is occasionally practised, it is more common for the owner of the land to receive a proportion (sometimes half) of the crop.

This right of chief's land is another, though indirect, source of gain to the hungry "chikka;" for if the villagers owning land do not take care to propitiate him with an occasional gift, he will declare that they have no right to their land, and prove, though falsely, that it is part of what rightfully belongs to his master. Nor is this by any means difficult to manage; for in this country there are no title-deeds to show, and few people would like to bear witness against their chief's interest.

The chief gains also by "Dainyet," or fines for certain offences: for instance, a blow or bloodshed. If a man be killed in a quarrel, and the parties agree to receive payment instead of the slayer's blood, half of the ransom goes into the chief's pocket.

This fining system is frequently converted by bad men—especially in troubled times, when the throne is unstable, and men do much as they please—into a means of cruel extortion. For instance, a peasant, who is supposed to be wealthy, is, on some pretext, taken and bound. A sum is then fixed for his liberty, and the iron bracelet is knocked tighter and tighter every day—like our boot of former times—till it is actually driven into the arm, and the hand dies. The poor prisoner, who perhaps has no means, having paid up all that he possessed, and collected as much as he can from the generosity of his friends, remains thus tortured, till chance, change of government, or death liberates him.*

* I have mentioned the system in some former chapter, and cited the case of young John Coffin, son of a countryman of ours, who died in

When a man quarrels with his wife, the cause is brought before the chief. If they determine to decide the case by separating, the judge claims a fine from each of them, more especially if the cause of the quarrel be about the partition of their property.

On a new governor's arrival at a province, if there be no house ready for his reception, the people are obliged to build him one, and, in the meanwhile, to furnish him with a suitable lodging. Seeing of how simple construction are even the hut palaces of the greatest chiefs, this latter privilege is not of so much real value as it might at first appear to an English reader.

Thus much for the chiefs and their perquisites. Of Oubi's mode of governing the country I need not say much, having already given, while speaking of other subjects, several anecdotes, from which it may be deduced that he rules the land with a pretty evenly-balanced rod, and that in some cases this rod becomes a rod of iron.

One very good plan has lately been adopted by him for the suppression of banditti and highway robbers—that of making the neighbouring villages responsible for any theft committed near to them. Thus, if one of the villagers be the guilty person, he is soon discovered, as every one of his neighbours is personally interested in the apprehension of the thief; and if the robber be a stranger, it is more easy to track him, for every one who has seen a suspicious person about would be glad to volunteer his information, hoping thereby to aid in the conviction of the culprit, and save himself and his fellow-villagers from the fine or other punishment which would otherwise be inflicted on them.

Moreover, this law induces the people to come readily to the help of any traveller who may be waylaid and need their assistance. The great drawback to anything like perfection

prison, having been confined and tortured as I have described by Oubi—not for the sake of money, but in hopes of his father giving himself up. Coffin was then on the coast, endeavouring to collect presents whereby to regain Oubi's favour, which he had lost by siding with his rival, Balgadda Araia.

in these matters is, that a malefactor has only to cross the frontier and take refuge in another country to be safe from the pursuit of justice. Nay, more: there are many provinces under Oubi's rule which, from being distant or rather unsafe, are little attended to. These are again places of refuge for evildoers. In fact, Oubi's police regulations (to give the European designation, though no such a thing as police exists) may be said to be confined to the limits of the great roads, as many a robbery, or even murder, may be and is committed in the less frequented districts without his ever hearing of it. The only chance of these offences coming to light depends upon the injured person's station in life. If he have relations of influence they will make some exertions in pursuing the aggressor; but if, on the contrary, he be poor or a stranger in the province, having no protection but the laws to look to, he may be murdered with impunity, and no one will care to inquire who did it.

One instance of Oubi's method of dealing justice struck me as so original that I could not help noting it down. In some parts of the country it is a very common practice, especially among the Mohammedans, to steal away children and sell them as slaves at Massawa. Once a man of that religion enticed away a young woman about sixteen years of age, pretending to hire her as a servant, and offering her high wages to induce her to follow him on his trips to the coast and back. She entered his service, and, to lull suspicion, he took her one or two short journeys and brought her safely back with him. With this both she and her friends were perfectly contented, especially since from time to time the man made her handsome advances of money on account of her wages. At last he started for the coast, taking her with him, and treating her as usual on the road. On his arrival there, however, he sold her to a slave-merchant, and then returned to another part of Abyssinia. The province, where the girl's friends resided was in a rather remote part of the country, and the fellow had hoped that, being poor and obscure, they would not think of seeking for him or her at such a distance. In this, however, he was mistaken.

Weeks and months elapsing without any tidings of the master or servant reaching her friends, they set about making inquiries respecting them, and at last gained sufficient information at Massàwa to lead them to suspect what had become of the girl and also that the Mohammedan had returned into Abyssinia.

It happened that one of the girl's uncles was a soldier, who, having distinguished himself in some manner, had been raised by the King to a small government and to the command of a few men. The distracted parents immediately had recourse to this relation, whose importance and greatness were doubtless magnified in their estimation proportionally to their own insignificance. The soldier entered into the matter with the utmost determination, and, having appealed to Oubi, obtained a promise that justice should be done him. Accordingly, the delinquent himself having got out of the way, Oubi summoned the principal members of his family and the chief men among the Mohammedans, and ordered them to restore the woman to her friends. They replied by asking how that was possible, seeing that she had been sold on the coast, and that, a long time having elapsed, she had probably been long since resold in Arabia, or even in Egypt.

Oubi cut the matter short by telling them that he knew nothing either of possibilities or impossibilities, but that the girl must be found: moreover, that, as in his mind one Christian subject was worth any number of Mussulmen, and that this one being a female might have increased the population by a number unknown of little Christians, and considering as he did that this practice among those of their race was nothing but an attempt at diminishing the proportion of true believers among his subjects, he did not choose to treat the present case as that of an individual crime, but as part of a religious conspiracy. On this account he thought himself as a Christian justified in raising a counter-plot, to neutralize their designs against his faith. So he fixed a time (I believe a month) wherein they were to find her out, even if she were at the bottom of the sea; telling

them that, if at the expiration of the time they had failed, two of the principal men of their religion should die,—and so on, every succeeding month, until either the lost one were found or their accursed race were extinct in his dominions.

They, knowing that Oubi's word was like the law of the Medes and Persians, stirred themselves in the matter, and in a short time a considerable sum of money was collected, and persons were scattered in every direction in search of the girl. She was traced to Jedda; but it was not without great difficulty, and even I believe the interference of the Turkish Governor, that her then owner could be induced to part with her, at about four times as much as she had cost him. The news of her having been found and repurchased arrived either just in time to save the lives of the first couple of men, or just after their death; I forget which.

As for the laws of the country, they are for the most part formed on the basis of the old Mosaic dispensation. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" is followed nearly to the letter,—so much so, that, as we have before said, if a man kill another; the murderer must be put to death by the nearest relatives of the deceased, with precisely the same kind of weapon as that with which he killed his victim.

To exemplify this custom:—Two little boys were playing in the woods near a village. Wandering about they chanced to see a tree called "owleh," on whose branches was a quantity of ripe wild fruit. The fruit is not very delicious, not more so than the hips and haws found on our hedges; yet any one who can remember the pleasure with which in his boyish days these berries were collected and eaten, will excuse our young heroes when I relate how, having looked upon the fruit, they longed for it. But though the "owleh" is not usually of very large growth, still the lowest branches were above their reach. To climb the tree was an arduous task, for these children were but of the ages of eight and five. The temptation, however, proved superior to the obstacles, and the elder boy with some difficulty succeeded in reaching the desired object. Higher and higher he mounted, till at last he stood on a bough from which he

could gather the best fruit ; and then with what feelings of joy and pride at his superior age and powers did he help himself, and throw down a supply to his little companion ! But "pride will have a fall !" and whether in this case it was brought about by the bough's breaking or his foot's slipping I cannot well remember ; but, however it may have been, the adage proved true, and down came our climber right on the head, and nearly down the throat, of his little comrade, who happened at the moment to be standing with up-turned eyes and expectant mouth, waiting a fresh shower of the golden berries. The elder lad got up unhurt beyond a few bruises ; but, to his horror, his friend rose not from the ground. He shook him, spoke to him, pinched him ; but all to no purpose. The little fellow was dead !

The child, shocked and frightened at having so unwittingly caused his companion's death, ran blubbering home, and told his mother all about it. The story got wind in the village, and the parents of the deceased child brought home the body, and set up howling and lamenting over it. Moreover, nothing would satisfy them but that the elder boy should be tried for his life, as having been the cause of the other's death. This they urged in the hope, no doubt, of a compromise in money from his family, or, in other words, making the best they possibly could of a bad business.

The trial was long ; but after much examination of the different books, and many opinions taken of the wisest men in the country, it was ultimately concluded that of a truth the boy was by law guilty of death.

But how was he to be killed ? Why, of course, as he had killed the other ; so in fact the sentence was, that the dead boy's brother should climb the tree and tumble down on the other's head till he killed him. This, however, did not suit the deceased's mother's feelings ; for, thought she, "If I consent to this, perhaps my other boy may die, or injure himself in his fall more than him whom he has to kill." So she preferred letting the culprit off to risking the life of her only surviving son.

This story may appear a caricature. All I can say in

favour of its credibility is, that I heard it related by a highly respectable individual, in a large party, where I was the only man not an Abyssinian, and the only person who appeared to consider it as at all improbable.

The punishment for theft varies according to the circumstances under which the offence may be committed. Some thefts, such as sacrilegious ones, are deemed worthy of death, or amputation of the hands or feet ; while others, of an ordinary kind, are considered as sufficiently expiated by imprisonment or a sound flogging. This latter is a severe punishment, and from the manner in which it is administered, appears to me to be a very effectual one. The whip used is such as commonly serves for urging the plough oxen in their labour. It is enormously long and heavy, and rejoices in the characteristic sobriquet of "the giraffe." The first stroke from this flagellator, if well applied, will often draw blood, even if it do not completely cut out a piece of skin. The mode of using it on criminals will be seen from the following story :—

During the absence of Dejatch Oubi on a war expedition, a man robbed a poor woman on the road of some pieces of cotton cloth, such as are used for money. She ran towards the nearest village, crying out for help, and at last induced some of the people to pursue the robber. They caught him ; and the pieces of cloth found on him, being of the number and quality described by her, were sufficient proof of the truth of her accusation to induce them to send him bound to Wàssan, who was acting as governor of the country during his master's absence. Witnesses were called, who identified the cloth as the woman's property ; and the thief, being convicted of the offence, was sentenced to be publicly whipped. Saturday, being market-day, was fixed upon for the execution of his sentence, as on that day many people would be collected together. The culprit was brought into the market place, and stripped, all but his inexpressibles. A man on each side held him by a long cord, tied to his hands, while another, brandishing the formidable "giraffe," walked behind him. In this procession he was led about among the

people, and forced to exclaim after every blow, which fell with fearful force and at regular intervals, "All ye who see me thus, profit by my example!"

The following is an instance of sacrilege and its punishment. Three men entered a church for the purpose of plundering it. Two of them purloined the incense-bowls, while the third appropriated to himself some gold ornaments from a picture representing the Madonna and Child. The trinkets were attached to the neck of the infant Saviour, and to the breast, head, and arms of the Virgin. Part of these stolen articles were given by the thief to a woman of the town, and she incautiously allowed them to be seen by some of her acquaintances, who, in their turn, let the secret out, till it came to the ears of the authorities. She was taken, and compelled to confess whence she had received them, and what she knew of the culprits. From the information thus obtained, one of the men was pursued; and at last, being apprehended, confessed his guilt, and declared who were his confederates. They also were captured; and at their trial it came out that they were the same parties who had committed a similar sacrilege some time before, but had escaped conviction. He who had stolen the ornaments was adjudged to be the most guilty, and was sentenced to be hanged. Each of the others lost his right hand and left foot.

It is singular that here, as in Europe, the executioner claims, as his perquisite, the wearing apparel and arms of the sufferer. The latter also usually offers him a bribe to do his job quickly and skilfully, else he will from spite linger as long about it as possible,—sawing off the limb rather than cutting it. The operation is performed with a small crooked knife; and, if the executioner be well propitiated, he will instruct his patient how to hold his hand, spread his fingers, &c., that he may get more readily at the joint. He may sometimes be even induced to give himself the trouble of putting an extra superfine edge on his instrument.

During my stay at Tokhulimny, one Saturday, going as usual to Addaro for the market, I found that my old friend

Hajji Aman, at whose house I generally put up, had gone out to discuss an affair about the occupation of some land. The dispute was this:—It appears that it belonged to a lady called Wozro Desta; that Aman had occupied it for a length of time, till now; another Mohāmedan, named Hajji Abd el Kāder, finding that it lay conveniently adjacent to his own, had secretly outbid him in the rent. The lady had consented to the arrangement, which was very unfair; for although there are no leases in the country, still the custom is that a landlord never discharges his tenant so long as he pays his rent, and otherwise conducts himself irreproachably.

Aman was accompanied only by his two sons, Saïd and Ibrahim, and by a servant, while Abd el Kāder, evidently predisposed for a trial of force rather than of reason, had with him his four sons and five other persons. Moreover his party were all armed, some with swords, others with clubs, while of those with Aman, Ibrahim only carried a sword.

The dispute waxing warm, and perhaps not tending to favour their pretensions, Abd el Kāder's party determined to try another argument wherewith to beat their adversaries. So, as a beginning, one of his sons with a club knocked down Aman's servant from behind, breaking his head and stretching him on the ground senseless, and nearly lifeless. The old man followed this good example by seizing my friend, who was still older than he, and after a momentary tussle dragged him off his mule, and, in the fall getting him under, proceeded in the most unfair manner to "hit him when he was down," with a stick. His son Ibrahim, naturally of a phlegmatic disposition, seemed at this moment to have but half an idea as to what was going on; but Saïd, blessed with a rather excitable temper, seeing his father in danger, snatched the sword from his apathetic brother, and, drawing it, gave old Abd el Kāder a slight blow on the forehead, more (as he afterwards assured me) with the object of frightening him than of injuring him. In truth I saw the wound a few minutes after, and it was scarcely deep enough

to lay bare the skull. The old man was thus *hors de combat*, as also Aman's servant.

Although, numerically speaking, the loss was equal on both sides, still in point of force that of Aman's was decidedly the greatest, for it had lost the services of a young and able man. Notwithstanding this they were more than equal in courage to their adversaries; for, on arriving at the spot at this critical moment with a number of people, I found the stronger party taking a passive line of conduct, retreating, and threatening law, while Saïd and Ibrahim, the latter of whom had just begun to be fully alive to what was taking place, were threatening more summary proceedings. We separated the combatants, both sides being our friends, and neighbours to each other, their houses adjoining, and the Chief's people, who were there, bound the principal actors in the fray.

The wounded men were carried to their respective homes, and a guard remained in the courtyard to prevent anything unpleasant occurring during the night. Next day I returned to Tokhulimny, having just heard the news of the death of Abd el Kàder, which occurred early in the morning; old age and ill temper having aided the otherwise slight wound in producing this result.

As for Aman's servant, who received the ugly knock on the head, his wound was so serious that his life was despaired of, but, thanks to his youth and unimpaired constitution, he recovered his health after about eight months' confinement to his bed; though I fancied, when last I saw him, that his ideas were not quite so bright as they used to be.

The sons of Abd el Kàder determined that Saïd should be tried for his life, and the trial was appointed to come on in a fortnight. I had been requested to attend as a witness, and of course had consented to do so. A few days, however, before the appointed time, a messenger came to me from Hajji Aman, begging me to bring as many people as possible in my train, as he said it was currently reported that

force would be resorted to by the prosecutors, if they found themselves unable to gain their point by fair means ; and, moreover, he had been informed that their friends were mustering in great numbers.

The place chosen for holding the court was near the church of Addy Gaddiva, a village not far from the dwelling of the Chief, Ato Merratch. It was a lovely grassy spot, on the top of a small hill, on which grew several large trees, under whose shade we sat in judgment. Merratch's two Belladt Inkaters, or counsellors (Ato Habo Georgis and Ato Osseràvil), officiated in his absence ; for he preferred staying at home on pretence of sickness to risking his precious body in the conflict which was likely to ensue. Nor was he without just reasons for his prudence ; from what I heard, both before and after the trial, it was not at all probable that his rival, Gabro Wahed, would let such an opportunity occur without having his agents mixed in the crowd, ready to pick off the Chief *accidentally*, if a fight could be got up.

Just as we were comfortably settled in our places the Belladt Inkaters suggested that as a good number of people were already assembled it would be better to begin the proceedings at once than to lose time in idle discussion. This was a prudential step, for already the friends of the opposed parties had begun to talk over the dispute, and from talking they had proceeded to argue ; and the argument was beginning to wax disagreeably warm. Accordingly arrangements were entered into for the prevention of confusion and quarrels. No one but the "shemmagillé," or old men (among whom I was included as an honorary member), were allowed to remain on the spot where we were. The servants and young men were ordered to separate, and to withdraw to a considerable distance ; the friends of Aman keeping the valley below, while the accuser's party remained on the tableland behind us.

These precautionary measures were highly necessary even as the matter now stood, but would, I fear, have been useless had the forces of Abd el Kàder mustered stronger than

those of Aman. But if our little army of 150 lances, or thereabouts, overawed theirs of 120, how much more did our 23 guns leave in the shade their paltry 7 matchlocks !

The fighting-men being thus disposed of, none remained but the judges and elders. These latter were then separated, having to act as counsellors for the parties whose cause they espoused. The friends of Hajji Aman remained near us, while those of the sons of Abd el Kàder retired to some distance to consult together freely, only occasionally coming to us to ask the advice of the chiefs on some point, and to receive their proposals or those of the accused party ; they then retired to consider the merits of such proposals and the propriety of their agreeing to them, again returning with an answer or an amendment, and thus, as nearly as possible, exemplifying perpetual motion.

The party of the defendant too, unless they had something particular to propose, or were desired to remain seated in order to receive some answer or hear some decision, usually rose at the approach of their opponents, and removed to a distance, in order to allow of their having freedom of speech with the two Belladt Inkaters.

This going and coming continued for nearly three hours, during which time also the laws, both Christian and Musulman, were referred to, and the few witnesses who had anything particular to say on the matter were examined. The final decision was, that death was the due of the slayer ; but as Saïd was held in great esteem by all the neighbourhood, the principal men present agreed in private that they should frame some excuse for delaying the execution of the sentence, hoping meanwhile that the family of the late Abd el Kàder might be prevailed on to receive a sum of money in lieu of blood.

Two of Abd el Kàder's sons, as the prosecutors, and Saïd's father and brother on his part, then met for the first time during the trial, in order to discuss this question. They parleyed together for a long time, going and coming as before, until at last the plaintiffs were prevailed upon to consent to Saïd's being reprieved for one month. The old

man, Hajji Aman, then begged to suffer in his son's stead, on the plea that the deceased, like him, was old, and that it would be a shame to kill a fine promising young man, whom so many would regret, for the sake of one whose foot was already in the grave; besides which he pointed out that the quarrel was his, and that his son only acted in his service, and did not strike till he felt compelled to do so in his father's defence. This petition also was granted after a sufficient amount of argument and consultation.

The parties then made oath to abide by the agreements thus entered into—namely, that the family of the deceased should in no way attempt to molest any of Hajji Aman's people until the appointed day, and that he would appear on that day, and give himself up for execution. His son Saïd, however, was kept bound as a hostage; his life being answerable for his father's appearance.

Thus terminated the events of the day, and, very contrary to general expectation, every man retired to his home in peace and quiet (barring always a wrangle or two by the way), not, however, till late, for it was dark before we reached Tokhulimny.

Some days after, I paid a visit to Belladta Habto Georgis, at whose house I had left the unfortunate Saïd in confinement, his right hand being chained to the left of Abdallah, one of the sons of Abd el Kàder. The night previous to my visit, the last-mentioned young man, thinking, doubtless, that it would do him credit to avenge his father's death, and being perhaps impatient at his protracted confinement, begged of one of Habto Georgis' servants to procure him a stone for a pillow. This was not an extraordinary request, as stones or blocks of wood are the usual pillows in Abyssinia. They brought him a very large one; he thanked them, and, placing it under his head, was, in a few minutes, snoring away comfortably. However, he was only shamming sleep, waiting till his prisoner should be really so. No sooner did he perceive this to be the case, than, raising himself up stealthily, he lifted the stone, and dashed it down with all his force on the place where he had in the dark

judged Saïd's head to lie. But he made a bad shot, only half scalping his intended victim, and hurting him just sufficiently to make him start up wide awake, and halloa, "Fire! thieves! murder!" &c. &c., as people usually do on such occasions. Hearing his cries, Habto Georgis came to see what was amiss, and, on being informed, caused the prisoners to be separated, and each to be bound to one of his own people.

This act of treachery proved in the end of the greatest possible advantage to the very man whom it was intended to injure; for some persons, influential friends of both parties, seized upon it as a good pretext to persuade the elder sons of Abd el Kàder that their wisest course now was to accept a compromise, as otherwise the accused party might claim to be set free, on account of Abdallah's having broken the oath, taken by the whole family, that no injury should be offered to any of the defendants. This reasoning could not, of course, have stood, had the prosecutors chosen to remain firm in their determination to accept of nothing but blood, for the assault could not be substantiated by Saïd's bare assertion, while Abdallah swore that the blow was purely accidental. It should be remembered that in Abyssinia there is no jury to decide on the merits of a case, nor does the opinion of the judge alter the sentence. He has only to declare that the prisoner is or is not guilty of the manslaughter of which he is accused: if the former, death is the doom of the slayer.

It depends almost entirely on the relatives of the deceased whether, from any favourable circumstances, they choose to spare the life of the prisoner, and receive the price of blood in lieu thereof. In the present case, whether the sons of the deceased were really alarmed at the possible consequences of their brother's rashness, or whether they were as glad as their neighbours of any plausible excuse for compromising the affair, is a matter of doubt; but it ended in their acceding to the wishes of their friends. I rather suspect that they did so for the last-mentioned reason; for Abd el Bâghy, the elder brother, told me afterwards that it was difficult to

take the life of an old neighbour and former friend, especially after blood had been allowed to cool, and after listening to the entreaties of the whole neighbourhood.

So it was agreed to spare the old man's life, and the ransom was at first fixed at 600 dollars, 300 of which were to go to Lemma, Oubi's eldest son, as great chief of the province in which it occurred, and the remaining half to the family of the dead man. This large amount was of course objected to by the payers, and Ibrahim, Aman's son, set off with a petition to Dejatch Oubi, stating the whole circumstances of the case, and praying for his decision. Oubi took a very just view of the matter, and, after sending to his son, reproving him for the exorbitance of his demand, reduced it to one third of its original amount, adjudging 100 dollars to his son, and a like sum to the other party. The ransom money was speedily collected, for, though Hajji Aman solicited no one's assistance, many of his friends of their own accord came forward; some volunteering loans, and others freely subscribing, till the whole was paid.

Thus all ended well: only Aman was obliged, from motives of prudence, to leave his former dwelling, which was adjacent to, and communicated with, that of Abd el Bâghy, as it was suspected that the brothers still plotted to be treacherously revenged on him, notwithstanding that the ransom had been paid, and that they had renewed their former oath of keeping the peace.

I have occasionally spoken of persons taking oaths in law cases. Among the Christians of Abyssinia it is not uncommon to settle a dispute about money matters (such as small debts or other affairs), when no witnesses can be produced, by one party's swearing to the validity of his claim. Even kings or chiefs, by a very solemn oath, confirm their promises of pardon to a rebel who may offer to return to his allegiance; but occasionally, as we have seen in a former chapter, promises, though thus consecrated, are broken through to suit the purposes of ambition, cupidity, or revenge.

There are many forms of swearing, one of which, considered as very binding, is called "Medammed." In taking this oath the swearer lights a little straw, which is placed in his hand on a layer of cowdung. When the straw is well ignited he extinguishes it by pouring water over it, and at the same time expresses a wish that his family may be burnt, and their memory blotted out from the face of the earth for seven generations, if he should violate his promise.

Others swear by the sword. Unsheathing one, they pray that, as surely as it is thus drawn in witness of their word, so surely may the holy Archangel St. Michael draw his to their destruction if that word should prove false. Similarly also by a gun or other weapon. Others again by the picture of St. George, placing their hands on his likeness, and calling upon him that should they prove faithless, he should direct his lance against them as formerly against the dragon.

But the most impressive and solemn oath is that which is taken in the church, when, for some important question, a man's opponent requires him to be sworn in that holy place. The man is taken into the outer circle of the church to the place where the bodies of the dead are laid previously to burial. He is there stretched on one of the mats; which (as I have described) are used instead of coffins. Lying there, he makes his asseveration at the moment when the Sacrament is being distributed, and calls upon the Almighty to record it, and to grant as a testimony that, should he have sworn falsely, he may return, after the space of three days, or seven at the most, to the mat on which he is now lying, never to leave it more.

It is, however, always considered a rather disgraceful action to call thus upon the Lord, or even on his saints, in matters of "filthy lucre," although, indeed, the cause be a just one, so much so, that many persons possessed of a good reputation, which they are scrupulous of in anywise sully, in the event of being required to pay an unjust debt, or even an imaginary one, would place the amount in the hands of some trustworthy person to be paid over to the claimant, should he choose to perjure himself, preferring

rather to risk their money than to be obliged to swear even to the truth.

Perjury is most justly looked upon as a horrible crime in this country as elsewhere. A man convicted of it would not only lose his reputation, and be for ever incapacitated from bearing witness even on the most trivial question, but he would likewise in all probability be bound and severely fined, and might indeed think himself fortunate if he got off with all his limbs in their proper places, or without his hide being scored by the "giraffe" to the pattern of a leg of roast pork.

CHAPTER XXX.

*CLIMATE.—PHYSICAL CONSTITUTION.—DISEASES,
MODES OF CURE, &c. &c.*

THE high lands of Abyssinia enjoy probably as salubrious a climate as any country on the face of the globe. The heat is by no means oppressive, a fine light air counteracting the power of the sun. At certain seasons of the year the low valleys, as of the Mareb and Taccazy, especially the former, are much to be feared, from the malaria which prevails, and which brings on, in persons exposed to its influence, most terrible inflammatory fevers, of which four cases out of five are fatal; and even in a case of escape from death, the effects on the constitution are such that it will be years before the sufferer recovers its shock, if indeed he should ever do so entirely. More than one of the few Europeans who have visited Abyssinia within the present century have fallen victims to it. Many have died also from dysentery—a complaint which often comes on in the rainy season as an epidemic. These two are the most commonly fatal complaints of Abyssinia.

The season most to be dreaded is immediately after the rains (about September), and the two or three following months. The cause of the prevalence of malaria at this time of the year is evident: the streams, which have been flooded for a long distance on each side of their ordinary limits, retire, and leave pools and marshy spots full of quantities of putrefied vegetable matter, the exhalations from which are the cause of the evil. It is seldom that a traveller need find himself in these spots during the dangerous season. When he does so, it is more frequently

from carelessness or foolhardiness than from necessity ; for here in Abyssinia the valleys are so narrow that it seldom takes you more than a short day's journey to pass from one village on the high ground to another on the opposite side. Moreover, unless you are pressed for time, you need not travel in the bad season. It will be much better to rest for a few months in some comfortable place, where you may well employ yourself in revising your notes, sketches, &c., till the sun and dry weather shall have removed the dangers and annoyances from your path.

I once travelled through a whole "krumt" or rainy season, across one of the most febrile districts in this part of Africa, namely, the provinces of Shiré, Waldabba, and Walkait, in Abyssinia, and the plains of the Atbara and Soufi, on my way to the capital of Nubia ; but then I had the experience of three years, a great part of which time had been passed in the backwoods about the Mareb. When I could get wood, I invariably lighted two large fires, and slept between them. This plan, though not very agreeable till you are used to it, is a capital preventive of disease ; for during the day the sun's heat raises the moisture in steam, which, when the evening becomes cool, descends in the form of dew or fog, and in this form is one of the greatest helps to a fever. The heat you have around you answers the purpose of a local sun, and you are in no more danger than during the daytime. But when I say I lay between two fires, it must be understood that they were so close together that I was obliged to cover myself with a piece of hide or a coarse native woollen cloth, to prevent the sparks or embers, which might fly out, setting fire to my cotton clothes. Another plan, which is always adopted by the natives, is not, I think, a bad one :—Roll your head completely up in your cloth, which will then act as a respirator. You may often see a nigger lying asleep with the whole of his body uncovered, but his head and face completely concealed in many folds.

Smoking I need not recommend. I can scarcely imagine that any man could travel long in these countries without

learning the necessity of it. The Abyssinians of the high lands have, it is true, a strong religious prejudice against it, and therefore it is, comparatively speaking, but little used among them; indeed, in most parts of their country the climate is so fine as to render it needless, or perhaps hurtful. The natives of low districts have, however, no such prejudice. The whole of the Shangalla of the Mareb and Taccazy smoke abundantly; and the niggers of the White Nile, both men and women, are never without a pipe; and some of their pipes would contain a pound of tobacco. I had formerly a very large one, but gave it away; the largest I now possess would not contain much more than a quarter of that quantity. Nature is the founder of custom in savage countries; though we should scarcely be apt to suppose it if we judge by what we see in civilized parts of the world, where custom is the great enemy of nature.

I would also recommend another practice, that of never venturing abroad in a low, unhealthy spot till the sun has risen an hour or more. It is customary to hold the sun in great dread. I do not pretend to say whether my constitution in this respect differs from that of other men; but, for my part, I never retired into the shade to avoid the noon-day heat; and for four years I never wore any covering to my head except the rather scanty allowance of hair with which nature has supplied me, with the addition occasionally of a little butter. During the whole of that time I never had a headache. In India I should think this exposure would be dangerous to Englishmen—not from the climate, but from the very un-Indian life led by our countrymen there. I am positive that it must be death to a man to go into the sun after a ball, a heavy supper, and a due (or often undue) proportion of ardent spirits to wash all down. The spirits are a necessary consequence on the eating.

In these climates a man cannot eat much, or, even if he could, he ought not. If he eats much meat or other indigestible matter, he must of necessity take either quantities of pepper and other spices, as do the native Indians and

Abyssinians, or he must drink hard, as do the Europeans in India and some parts of Egypt. Fortunately in Abyssinia there is little inducement to excess, either in eating or drinking. There are no good cooks, and the tap is of the most inferior quality ; but the semi-starvation to which one is now and then reduced, so far from being a hardship in travelling, as it is often represented by tourists, is, if not continued to extremity, one of the greatest possible blessings. Of course a man who cares a straw about what he eats should never attempt to travel in Africa. His life would be anything but one of pleasure ; it would indeed be a matter of hardship. It is not sufficient to say, "I can eat anything that is clean and wholesome." You will often have to eat things that are far from being either, especially the former. The proverb, "What does not poison fattens," is much nearer the mark. I have eaten of almost every living thing that walketh, flieth, or creepeth—lion, leopard, wolf, cat, hawk, crocodile, snake, lizard, locust, &c. ; and I should be sorry to say what dirty messes I have at times been obliged to put up with. Still I cannot manage the game "just properly kept," as it is called, but which I should call putrid, notwithstanding that it is so much esteemed by epicures in England : nor can I fancy hyæna or vulture, whose taste in this matter appears often to agree with that of our European gourmands.

There is no doubt that, by constant exposure to the air, plenty of exercise, low living, and a good deal of rough knocking about, the skin becomes hardened, the nerves deadened, and the whole system rendered less susceptible of inflammatory action.

Thus it is that their mode of life makes savages, all over the world, wiry and active, and endows them with what, to Europeans who have never tried the same system, appears a wonderful amount of endurance, either of hunger, thirst, fatigue, or actual pain.

Some nations, the North American Indians for example, actually train themselves before undergoing any amount of premeditated suffering. I remember Mr. Catlin telling me

of one tribe (the Mandans), among whom it was a custom for young men to go through a very severe ordeal before they could be considered as warriors. One part of this trial of fortitude consisted in being dragged, at full speed, round and round a piece of ground by large hooks stuck into the flesh of the novice, who was thus banged and bruised till the hooks tore themselves away from him, leaving him stretched on the ground senseless and apparently dead. Notwithstanding their usual hard life, and the habits of endurance to which they are early accustomed, these very Indians consider that three days' absolute fasting is requisite to enable them to survive the trial.

I have never noticed in Africa any education for the purpose of rendering men patient under suffering ; nor does this power appear to be considered so meritorious—indeed so absolutely necessary to the character of a man—as it is among the tribes of whom we have just spoken. In Abyssinia, the only sort of bravado of this kind that I ever witnessed is mere child's play, nor can it indeed be said to be customary. Sometimes when a party of young men are seated together, the ladies present will bring bits of the pith of millet-straw, cut to about an inch long, and of the thickness of a man's thumb, or, what is better still, pieces of old rag, rolled tight, so as to form a pellet of similar dimensions. These are arranged in patterns by each lady on the extended arm of any one whom she may choose, and their tops lighted. The only merit in the man is to allow them to burn themselves out entirely without moving his arm so as to cause them to fall, or evincing the slightest consciousness of pain either by word, look, or gesture ; on the contrary, he must continue a flow of agreeable conversation, as if nothing was occurring. The lady operator usually blows her fires to keep them going, and the material, whether pith or rag, being of a very porous nature, and burning slow like tinder, the action of the fire is felt on the skin long before it actually reaches it. It is, in fact, an operation similar to the "moxa" of European surgery. When the pellets are completely burnt out, the lady rubs

her hand roughly over the cauterized parts, so as to remove the burnt skin. On a copper-coloured person the scars, when well healed, assume a polished black surface, which contrasts very prettily with the natural skin. On a European they are scarcely distinguishable, the polish only remaining without any difference of colour. Out of ten marks that I had made on my arm on one occasion, only one shows well; it happened to be burnt deep, and I kept it from healing for three months, so as to leave a good scar. This is frequently done for the sake of ornament, without any bravado whatever.

While talking of ornaments, I may add that many of the African tribes have devices for adorning their flesh which would be considered as horribly painful by Europeans, but which they treat very lightly. Some of the Abyssinians make a flesh-bracelet on the wrist, by tightly tying round it a piece of root which possesses, or is believed to possess, a corrosive property. After some time, at any rate, it eats into the flesh, so as to form a deep sore, which, when the root is removed, gradually heals, leaving, not merely an ordinary scar, but a perfect raised band, of the thickness of one's little finger: for the same purpose, they occasionally make gashes of an inch long or more on the arms or body, which also, when healed, leave raised scars, and are considered ornamental.

Among some of the genuine negroes, in the neighbourhood of Kordofan and elsewhere, the females are gashed in stripes all down the body and back, and the more the scars are raised the more beautiful is the ornament considered. I have seen slave girls nearly covered with excrescences, sometimes of the size of a pigeon's egg, the appearance of which is almost disgusting to a stranger, though highly esteemed among themselves. I do not exactly know how this effect is obtained. I have often inquired whether they use any means to produce it, and have been told of various; but though I have made frequent experiments on myself, I never succeeded in procuring the desired beauty spots. Hence I am led to suspect that it depends much on the quality of the

skin, and am confirmed in this opinion by two observations ; first, that on a pure black hide the marks are much more prominent than on one of copper-coloured hue ; and second, that I have seen scars certainly not intended for ornament, viz., those produced by a sound whipping, in quite as “alto-rilievo” as those intentionally made.

Still continuing to compare the power of endurance of pain in a savage with that of a European, I might say that it has often struck me as singular that our soldiers in former times should suffer so much from a few hundred lashes with the cat. I never, of course, tried it myself, and therefore may be wrong, but believe that, if I were out in those countries, I could find many a black fellow who would take 500 willingly for a trifling consideration. A description of the mode of duelling practised in the neighbourhood of Dongola may serve to throw some light on this assertion, which may probably appear rash to many of my readers. I have already described the way in which they fight at Sonàkin with crooked knives, so shaped as to cut well without any possibility of causing death ; the Dongolawi’s duel is conducted on exactly the same principle, and accordingly the victor is he who can receive the most wounds without shrinking or fainting. The only difference is in the weapon, a long heavy whip, made of a solid thong of hippopotamus-hide, tapering from the thickness of a stout walking-stick downwards ; in its effects, however, it is equal to the knife, for every blow, if well delivered, cuts a deep furrow into the flesh. This duel is not a serious matter, but is engaged in by young men on the slightest possible pretext, often merely to display their manhood. An “angareb” (couch), under which a jar of beer is usually set (for refreshment between the rounds), is placed between the combatants, each of whom is stripped to the waist and armed with one of the formidable whips I have described. As soon as all is ready they begin, giving alternate stripes on each other’s shoulders, but neither being allowed to evade or ward off a blow ; they continue this agreeable pastime for a very long time, till one falls down

exhausted from loss of blood and the punishment he has received.

A still better proof of the capabilities possessed by these people for enduring beating, is the coolness with which they receive the terrific punishments so frequently inflicted on them by their Turkish governors. I myself have witnessed many instances of men of all ages, up to sixty and more, being laid down to receive several hundred blows. In Egypt these are given with the "coubatch," or hippopotamus whip; I have just described; but in the upper parts of Nubia, Kordofan, &c., the Turks, probably judging that the natives must be accustomed to this style of flogging from their frequent use of it among themselves, always punish with the "nabout," a heavy stick or cane, about five feet long, and an inch in diameter,—often much more, seldom less. The culprit is laid down with his face to the ground, and held there by ropes tied to his feet and under his arms; and the blows are delivered two-handed by a couple of soldiers, who, standing one on either side of the sufferer, strike by turns exactly as we thrash corn in England: the officer, in the mean while, sits near, smoking, and, if he be a merciful man, counting the blows on his "sibha" (a sort of rosary used by the Mohammedans). In the many instances of this style of punishment that I have witnessed, I never remember having heard a man cry out lustily: frequently I have heard them boast, "I am a two-horned ox! I am brother of the girls ten times!" and so on; but the greatest proof of suffering they ever seemed to utter was an occasional groan from a weakly man, or a few prayers for mercy, not loudly ejaculated, but spoken in nearly the natural tone of voice. I remember an instance of an old man who, with five others, was sentenced to 500 for evading the taxation by leaving his province. After the first twenty blows he once or twice repeated, "Mercy, oh Bey!" when a woman, who was standing by, coolly said, "What's the use of tiring your throat when you know you'll get nothing by it?" and from that moment he lay as still as if nothing were

occurring. On account of his age and my intercession he got off with 180. None of the others, indeed, got their full quota, but received from three to four hundred: for my friend Moussa Bey, who ordered the punishment, is, for a Turk, a very kind man. They were, however, all carefully impressed with the notion that not one blow had been spared, and went away with the promise that next time they were convicted of a similar offence they should receive 1000 each.

One more anecdote, and I have done with floggings. There was a man in Khartoum suspected of having stolen some money in small gold coins from an Egyptian merchant. The evidence was strong enough to cast suspicion on him, but not sufficient to prove him guilty, so the usual Turkish method was employed—namely, of endeavouring to extort confession by the stick. The man was laid down, and received 200, without any further effect than to call forth a repetition of his protestations of innocence; on this he was liberated, though every one believed him guilty. He left the court with such a self-satisfied look that the sergeant of the guard, who happened to be a friend or countryman of the man who had lost the money, could not restrain himself from venting his personal feelings against the supposed criminal in the shape of a sound box on the ear as he passed him. This one blow had more effect than the former 200, for it caused the missing coins to bear testimony themselves against the thief by jumping out of his cheek, where he had held them during the whole of his trial and punishment. Though I did not witness this fact myself, I can confidently vouch for the truth of it, as it was related to me by several persons almost immediately after it had occurred. To make one part of it more credible to my European readers, I must explain that the gold coins alluded to, though as large as a half sovereign, are scarcely thicker than paper, being in value about two shillings of our money; also that the natives, being in the habit of carrying small articles in their mouths, especially tobacco, are expert in this monkey-like mode of concealment. The man evidently considered that he had made

a good bargain in securing a few shillings at the expense of his 200 blows: for, had he confessed at the first stroke and restored the money, he would, in all probability, have received very few, if any, more blows than he did before the accidental discovery.

In different parts of this volume I have related many anecdotes from which may be gathered the facility with which wounds heal on persons whose blood is cool and whose systems are reduced to a sufficient degree of training by a life of hardship and privation; for instance, in the case of the splinter through my own foot, many medical men have assured me that, had I been fat with European good things instead of half starved, I should have certainly been confined to my bed for a length of time, with a possibility of locked jaw. But I allude to more serious wounds, as the horrible cases of the mutilation of Ato Wassan, the boy whose master attempted to murder him in the Barea war, and others of a similar nature. I can indeed name several who have suffered and recovered, as Abba Seyfo, once a soldier, now a Catholic Priest; Shelika Tammerou, &c. &c. But the most striking instance of fortitude of which I ever heard, and at the same time similar as a cure to those just cited, occurred after an action below Armatchoho between a detachment of the Egyptian forces and some of an Abyssinian chieftain's. The details of the battle are unimportant here; suffice it to say, that, from some jealousy and much mismanagement of the Turkish leaders, their men were divided, and, being taken in confusion, completely routed by the Abyssinians. This is of course a termination which rarely occurs where troops entirely armed with firearms, and in some measure disciplined after the European fashion, have to do with an irregular force nearly all of whom carry nothing but lances and shields. The Abyssinians, elated with the victory, set about to slaughter and mutilate all whom they could catch, a few only of the best mounted escaping, and a few great men being taken prisoners for the sake of their ransom. Two negro soldiers of the Egyptian regular infantry threw themselves down and feigned to be dead, hoping

thereby to escape observation: some Abyssinians coming up to take their trophies, these men actually submitted to the fearful operation without flinching, or in any way allowing their sham to be detected, and, even after it was done, had the fortitude to remain perfectly still, until their enemies were gone, when, strange to relate, they were able to get up and crawl away, and ultimately effect their escape, though the field of battle was far from any place of safety. There is, I believe, not the slightest doubt of the truth of this story; both of the men recovered entirely, and one was living at Khartoum when I left that place; the other had died a short time before my arrival there, after having enjoyed perfect health for several years. Thus far what I have said has tended to show in some respects the enduring powers of the blacks, and thence some may conclude that they are of remarkably good constitutions. For my part, I am persuaded that a European, who began their system of life early and carried it through perfectly, would be as capable of endurance of any kind as a savage. From my own experience, I have reason to believe it to be the case, because when in such training I never found myself inferior to them at all in the endurance of fatigue or privation, and could always stand the heat of their country as well and often better than the natives themselves.

In speaking of the diseases of Abyssinia, I would begin with the most prevalent. *Tænia*, or tape-worm, is, on this account, certainly the first to be considered, for the whole Abyssinian population may be said to be afflicted with it. Out of above forty persons, male and female, whom I had as servants at one time, only two were exempt, and I should say that this was a rather larger proportion than would be found in a general average of the people. The cause of this complaint has been frequently made a subject of speculation; by many it has been assigned to the eating of raw meat; by others again, to the great quantity of cayenne-pepper used by the Abyssinians. The first appears the more probable; but I have known many instances of persons—myself among the number—who had eaten raw meat in

considerable quantities with impunity; while I have heard of others, even one or two Europeans, who had never touched it, and yet had suffered. Nearly two out of every three white men who have resided a few months in the country have had it, and yet few of these had eaten very largely of the supposed cause of it; hence I should say that, if the cause be not in the climate, water, or teff-bread, it must still remain a mystery. The natives are in the habit of taking physic regularly once every two months to relieve them of this malady, but as yet they have no means of completely curing it, the head of the worm (as they say) remaining as a germ, from which link after link is formed, till a future dose is required. In this I believe European doctors are nowise superior to the natives, for they have lately introduced into the Pharmacopœia one of the Abyssinian medicines called kousso. This is the flower and seed of a tree which grows abundantly in some parts of the country. In Abyssinia a supply sufficient for a man's life may be procured for the value of 6*d.*, while in Europe a single dose, and that a very small one, costs several shillings. Beside this, the Abyssinians use the bark of another tree, and the bulbous root of a small plant which, if it be not our common wood sorrel, is very nearly allied to it. One of these—I believe the bark—is reckoned much more efficacious than the “kousso,” but is seldom used, from being supposed to be highly dangerous in its effects. The one is called “basinna,” the other “muitcha-muitcho.” Neither of these, however, is used when the kousso can be procured. The dried flowers are ground or pounded as fine as possible, and a strong infusion made, of which the patient takes more than half a pint fasting. About noon, when it has taken the required effect, a good quantity of beer or tedge is considered beneficial, on which account, if the sufferer be a servant, he begs for a supply from his master, or any friends who may be dining with him; coming round at meals, holding in his hand a small cross made of two bits of stick or straw, and exclaiming, “For the sake of Mary, for the sake of the

Saviour," &c., when a horn of liquor is usually given him. Mr. Salt (in Lord Valentia's Travels, vol. iii. p. 138) seems to have noticed this custom, but not to have understood the meaning of it. He says, in describing the "brinde" (brouto) feast, "There were also one or two men, with small crosses in their hands, which they held out, intimating thereby *that they were at that time obliged to fast.*"

Next is the complaint called "hannat," which is a glandular enlargement in the throat, ultimately forming abscesses, which increase to such a size that, if no means to cure them be taken, the throat is completely stopped up, and the patient suffocated; this, after the tœnia, is perhaps the most frequent malady of the Abyssinians. The premonitory symptoms are violent pains in the head, back, and legs, and much dizziness. The following remarks, taken from my original notes, will exemplify the treatment adopted for it:—"Tisphitou" (one of my servants), "on his return from Mai Quollaw, was seized with the 'hannat;' not having any of the preventive medicine, they twice took a good deal of blood from his head, but with no beneficial effect. The night before last he was obliged to be carried into the hut, being nearly senseless; the other servants urged him to have his throat examined, but he seemed reduced to that listless, apathetic state of mind in which we see people who are suffering from violent sea-sickness, for he begged to be left alone and not bothered; on being expostulated with, and the danger of delay pointed out to him, he merely said, 'Oh, never mind; let me alone.' However, a soldier, who happened to be in the village, volunteering his services, and professing to be a skilful operator, we forced the patient's mouth open, and held him while the examination was going on. The throat was almost entirely closed, and, had the man been allowed to remain till the morrow, he would in all probability have died. The soldier, however, made short work of it; for thrusting in his hand, he tore the swellings with his nail, and the patient, having ejected a quantity of matter and blood, was pronounced out of danger for the time. On the advice of the operator

I gave him a good dose of jalap, and he ultimately recovered, though he remained in a very weak state for several days. Since his illness almost all of our people have suffered more or less from this same complaint. The preventive medicine which I alluded to is a sort of root, which is chewed in an early stage of the malady, and seems, when taken in time, to be a certain antidote. One symptom is extreme furriness of the tongue." The disease of which Mr. Salt (*vide* Valentia's Travels, vol. iii. p. 80) doubts the existence in Abyssinia is unfortunately only too prevalent; I myself have treated many cases of it, generally with much success where it was taken in time; but occasionally I have seen some most horrible instances where it has been neglected—living specimens, quite as fearful to behold as any of the models in the Musée d'Anatomie at Paris. That the Abyssinians appreciate the difference between it and the scorbutic affection with which Mr. Salt confounds it is evident from their having distinct names for it. In Tigrè it is called "fintàta;" in Amhàric, "kitting;" and in the Galla language, "fànto." I have already mentioned that among the native remedies the flesh or blood of the wild boar is reckoned as one, probably, as I said, from their having seen the lard used by Europeans in the composition of mercurial ointment. They have several others, but none productive of good effect. Near Metemma, in the Nubian province of Berber, there is a sort of whitish-coloured earth, called by the natives "toureyba," which is used as a medicine in these cases, and I have been assured (even by some European medical men) with a good result: in Abyssinia they possess nothing so valuable. There was an old Armenian named Gorgorious (Gregory), who administered to sufferers, at a considerable charge, what he professed to be a certain cure. This was nothing more nor less than a dozen or two pills, containing corrosive sublimate, the recipe for which he, no doubt, obtained from some quack in Egypt. Though a rather dangerous medicine, this preparation of mercury might in many cases, if properly administered, be beneficial; but with our friend, who never troubled himself either to

examine his patient, or inquire how long he has been afflicted, simply receiving his fee and desiring the sufferer to take so many per diem till the box was finished, it was a case of "kill," perhaps, oftener than of "cure." The natives, too, are very difficult to deal with, for they cannot be made to understand that, where one dose will do them good, two may be injurious; nor are the blacks worse in this respect than the Turks, Greeks, or Egyptians—of which I have had many proofs. One I may relate, as having occurred in Abyssinia, though the person was an Albanian silversmith. I had been treating him for some time with calomel pills, one grain three times a day, and he was progressing very satisfactorily, but being obliged to leave. Adoua I gave him a small stock, with particular instructions how he was to judge when it might be necessary to decrease the doses, &c. I left him in great good humour with my treatment, and promising to obey my instructions carefully. Calling upon him on my return after a few days' absence, I was told by his servant that he was very bad indeed; and on going to him I found him in a most pitiable state of salivation and in a tremendous fright. By signs—for he could not speak—he confessed to having taken double doses, under the idea, no doubt, that he would recover in double-quick time. I gave him a good rating, frightened him a little, and then relieved him from his sufferings with a strong dose, which soon set him right again.

There is a sort of horrible scrofulous disease in all these countries, which causes the loss of the hands or feet. The people of Sennár call it "judàm;" I forget the Tigrè name. Elephantiasis is not so common in Abyssinia as in the low lands to the north, nor is the Guinea worm. I have never seen any case of the latter in this country, except in a pilgrim who was merely passing through. In the provinces of Sennár it is called "fràntite," and its origin attributed to the black soil of the country; it sometimes appears in the arms or body, but most commonly in the lower part of the leg. The only cure is to wind the worm gradually out,

taking care not to break it, which accident might be productive of very dangerous consequences.

Scabies is very prevalent, but I am doubtful if it is the same as that which is common with us. It generally fixes itself on the elbows, where it forms a large sore difficult enough to get rid of. It does not seem to depend at all on the habits of the person or on contagion, for I have known Europeans to have it without any assignable cause.

The various fevers of tropical climates are tolerably abundant in Abyssinia, though principally confined to the low marshy districts just after the cessation of the periodical rains. The natives seem to have but one name for any fever caught in the jungle ("nedad"), whether it be common intermittent ague or the fearful bilious jungle-fever; while those of a low typhoid class, which occasionally visit even the most elevated towns, often as epidemics, are called "mitât." Local bleedings, aperients, and emetics, are administered in these; for aperients they have certain herbs, but not an uncommon agent for producing both purgative and emetic effects is a large quantity of "ghee" (clarified butter) and honey. Dysentery, and the other complaints of the same family, are by no means uncommon. This is the disease which is most fatal to Europeans in these countries: several Frenchmen have died of it in Abyssinia. The natives chew a root, in addition to the above-named medicines, for this class of malady. The root has a pungent taste, between ginger and pepper, and I really believe it did me some good on one occasion, when, not being able to have recourse to my own drugs, I was obliged to put up with those of the country. Small-pox is, I should say, not so common here as in many parts of the world: it has visited Abyssinia, as an epidemic, once or twice in the last fifteen years, but, judging by the number of those who bear its traces, I should say, not very severely.

Violent madmen are not often seen in Tigrè: I only saw one; he was a Mussulman of Adoua. A black "fàky" (or Mohammedan priest), who happened to be passing from

the Felláta country on the west coast, on a pilgrimage to Mecca, undertook his cure : he caused the poor creature to be bound hand and foot with irons, and then alternately flogged him cruelly, and read portions of the Koran over him, several times a-day. As the scene of this treatment, the yard of the Musjid (or Mohammedan chapel), was separated from my court by only a low wall, I was grievously annoyed by the continued repetition of the stripes and yells which issued from it, and complained, but could obtain no redress, as it was a work of charity and piety.

The Abyssinians have a great dread of poison ; they believe that many of their countrymen have considerable skill in its use. I never could discover what the supposed preparation was, that being, as I understood, a secret confined to few persons only. It was, however, described as a powder of light brownish colour, with which a man could be killed by a small quantity being sprinkled over a bundle of clothes and sent to him, or by its being thrown at him as he passed. An instance of the first case was related to me as having occurred shortly before my arrival in Abyssinia. Some one, wishing to kill Ato Wassan (governor of Adoua), having waited for the opportunity, went one day to where his clothes were being washed in the brook Assam. Entering into conversation with the servants about the quality of the different garments, he pretended to examine one which was already dried, and then took his departure. If I remember right, the servant who took the clothes home was seized, and became perfectly mad even before he reached the house ; in consequence he threw them away, and so soiled them as to make it necessary to wash them a second time. Another man who collected them shared a similar fate, and, suspicion being directed to the clothes, they were destroyed. My story is very imperfect, for I have almost forgotten it ; I cannot even say whether the servants recovered or not. I think Ato Wassan had an anonymous warning on the subject the same day that it occurred. Search was made for the poisoner, but he was nowhere to be found, and no one of the men who saw him knew who he was, so that he was sup-

posed to be a stranger employed by some great man who owed the chief a grudge.

I saw an instance of the poison being thrown on a person which did not at all tend to prove what I very much doubted—namely, that this mode of poisoning was possible. A friend of mine, named Gabro Weldy, one day riding out in the market with his attendants, was suddenly taken ill and obliged to go home. A message was brought me, begging of me to take medicines and go at once, as he was poisoned, and would surely die. He was chief of part of Àdoua, but had a rival whom he had supplanted in the government, and in consequence lived in perpetual fear for his life. I obeyed the summons, and found my friend lying in his house surrounded by his friends. Naturally of a full, plethoric habit, his face was unusually swollen; he foamed slightly at the mouth, and seemed rather dull, but sensible. I must say I was puzzled; it might be epilepsy, or the effects of a *coup de soleil*, and I didn't know what to do; so, unwilling to bear the responsibility altogether, I proposed giving him an emetic, but explained that, the nature of his complaint being new to me, I did not pretend to answer for the effects it might produce. His relations and he himself jumped at the notion (whenever did a nigger refuse to take tartar emetic or jalap?), and I gave him a pretty large dose of the former, which cured him, though why or wherefore I don't pretend to say. I tried to argue that poison could not have been the cause, asking them how a man could, in a crowded place, throw a powder over his victim without its chancing to affect either himself or any of the bystanders, but all to no purpose; poison it was, and I was a wonderful doctor.

The people of Walkait are said to be very skilful poisoners. I was cautioned against them before going into their country, and consoled with the assurance that I should never leave it; “for,” said the people of Tigrè, “if they like you, they will force you to stay among them by means of medicine or a charm; if they dislike you, you will die.” I have spoken of local bleedings: these are of two sorts, one with, and one

without, the aid of a cupping-horn. The mode of cupping is thus performed : the skin of the part is taken up between the thumb and fore-finger of the left hand, and a gash, half an inch long, cut in it with a razor ; a small cow's horn, with the point cut off and perforated, is placed over the cut, and the operator sucks at the point, holding in his mouth a small piece of rag or chewed leather, which, with his tongue, he places over the orifice in the horn, either to exclude the air when he has to take breath, or to prevent the blood entering his mouth. The other plan of bleeding (without the horn) is often used for headaches, &c., where the blood is to be taken from the forehead. The patient places his hands one behind each ear ; a tourniquet, made of a piece of rag, is then wound round his neck and wrists, and tightly compressed by means of a small stick ; this, of course, causes the veins in the forehead to swell, when a razor is fillicked across the eyebrow, precisely as we use a fleam, and the blood flows out in a stream to a distance of three or four feet. Talking of a fleam puts me in mind of a piece of Abyssinian farriery which rather amused me. My friend Dejatch Shétou, having lamed a favourite horse by a strain which he got while playing at "goux," left him for some time in my town house, hoping that with rest he would recover. On his return, the horse being no better, he sought out a skilful man, who undertook to cure the strain. He had the horse brought out, and strong cords tied, one so as to bring his hind feet together, and the other the fore feet ; the end of the hind rope was then passed between the fore legs, and that of the fore rope between the hind legs, and men pulling simultaneously at each, all four feet were, after some difficulty, dragged together, and the poor animal thrown very roughly on his side ; the feet were then securely tied, and a stout wooden bar placed through them, by which, several men putting their shoulders to it, the horse was slung feet uppermost, and then kicked in the ribs by the veterinary to make him struggle. The process was repeated several times, and I heard them say that he was much better before I left the country.

To sum up, avoid bad localities; follow as much as possible the native customs with regard to food; but, above all things, be abstemious in every respect; and, as a general rule, if you should be attacked by a fever, an emetic is not a bad remedy to begin with. Some people are for general bleeding in every case, though I believe our neighbours over the Channel are stronger advocates for such a treatment than we are. For my own part, I never have been bled, and I hope I never shall, especially in a hot climate. Local bleedings, such as the natives practise, are often highly advantageous; and firing with a hot iron at their recommendation may also be adopted. For severe inflammation of the bowels, when you cannot bear to be touched on the part, some boiling water poured on it will be a ready and effective blister,—a wet rag being wrapped round in a ring to confine the water within the intended limits. For bad snake-bites or scorpion-stings, bind above the part as tightly as possible, and cut away with a knife; then apply the end of an iron ramrod, heated to white heat. This of course I mean supposing you to be in the backwoods, out of the reach of medicines. *Aquafortis* is, I have heard, better than the hot iron, as it eats further in; and for most scorpions and some sorts of snakes, to rub the parts with strong sal volatile, butter of antimony, or other preparation of similar effect, will be sufficient. With all these modes of treatment, if you have the means, take internally twenty-five to thirty drops of laudanum, and a similar quantity of the liquid ammonia. There are, however, I believe, many snakes whose bite can scarcely be cured anyhow.

CHAPTER XXXI.

NATURAL HISTORY.

ZOOLOGY would, perhaps, have been a more correct title for this chapter, as it will contain very little of any other branch of natural history ; but anything ending in "ology" has too scientific a sound for my unpretending pen.

Though much has already been done by travellers in this branch of science—especially I might name Messrs. Ruppell and Schimper—still Abyssinia offers a wide field of research for the naturalist. Its mineralogical wealth is as yet only a matter of speculation, its botany but imperfectly known, and there are hundreds of interesting objects in zoology which, though many of them are known to the traveller by their native names and reputations, have hitherto kept themselves out of the way of collectors. Of the class of large game I have met with or heard of a great many of the varieties found at the Cape of Good Hope and the interior of Southern Africa ; though, from the country being much more thickly inhabited and the people in a more advanced degree of civilization, they are not to be met with in the same abundance as they are in those more desert regions. The mountainous, rocky nature of Abyssinia is unfavourable to the sportsman, for the larger animals confine themselves almost altogether to the valleys and low plains. The lion is not common in most parts of the country, though pretty often to be met with on the Mareb, Taccazy, and other rivers, and on the plains to the north, by Walkait, the Barea country, Bidéles, and Ailat. The natives of these parts do not hold him in such dread as one would be led to believe by the accounts of some travellers. I have heard, more

than once, of shepherds, armed only with sticks and stones, driving away lions which had entered their flock. They have an idea here that, if attacked with metal weapons, such as spears, swords, or guns, the lion will turn on his assailants : but that he will invariably take himself off unresistingly if sticks and stones only be employed against him. The hunters assert that in his attack the lion walks or creeps up to his intended victim till within the distance that he can cover with three bounds, and that, should his third spring be eluded, he will probably pass on, and not attempt a second attack : this theory is, I believe, very little to be relied on. They say, also, that when on the defensive, if a man be the aggressor, the lion will retire twice ; but, if the hunter still persist in advancing, he will not spare him a third time. As regards the evil that lions do in the way of carrying off people, &c., though such cases do occasionally occur, they are very rare. Somehow or other, European travellers generally manage to get attacked much oftener than any one else—at least so it was remarked to me by a reverend missionary, who said that he had seen more attacks by lions recorded in books of travel than he had ever heard of having occurred to the whole native population in the same space of time. Among Eastern and African nations one always hears of the wonderful doings of some other nations a long way off ; stories of this sort, if pursued, would lead the traveller, like a will-o'-the-wisp, into the uttermost and innermost parts of the land ; for when he arrives at the spot where, as was first related to him, the wonder happened, he will, on inquiry, be told that, though doubtless the story was true, yet the scene of its occurrence was not there, but some ten days' journey further off, and so on.

In Abyssinia, for instance, they tell how, among the Gal-las, there are certain tribes, among whom the boys go out to slay the lion single-handed, and armed only with a small knife and a piece of stick a foot long : the stick being used literally *to stop the lion's jaw*. The boy provokes the kingly animal by insulting epithets, till he springs open mouthed at him, when, with great dexterity, the youthful hunter thrusts

his pointed stick perpendicularly between the lion's jaws, which, closing on it, are thereby rendered innocuous, after which the boy proceeds deliberately to cut his throat with his knife. Fancy a boy holding a lion with one hand and cutting his throat with the other! Cœur de Lion could not have done it. I have often asked how it happened that the sportsman forgot bags for his claws—weapons far more dangerous, and more often used by all the feline tribe, than their teeth. Strange to say, old hunters have told me this story and believed it; and others, seated by, have heard it and never raised a doubt as to its veracity. I have asked Gallas if there were any custom in their mode of lion-hunting to give foundation to such a romance; and have heard from more than one, that, though this practice did not occur among them, it did among the Somauli tribes. Similarly, why should I not tell of the Beni Kelb (Sons of the Dog), whose males are dogs, and females beautiful women; or of the Beni Temsah (Sons of the Crocodile), who have human bodies, but heads like those of their ancestor's family. Surely, if caught, they would be considered very great "lions" in their way. I have heard of the former of these nations in almost every country that I have visited in Africa, from Egypt to the White Nile, including Kordofan in Abyssinia, and even in Arabia, whither their fame has been carried, doubtless by pilgrims. They are, by most, believed to exist near the Fertit country (south of Darfour), where there are copper-mines, and the people of which file their teeth to points, saw fashion. They are said (that is the Sons of the Dog) to be as hospitable as the sons of Adam, or more so; strangers are well received and entertained by the women, while the dogs go out, bring game, fawn on them, and offer them all sorts of canine welcome. But of one thing the traveller must be cautious—the Beni Kelb are jealous dogs, and their feelings on this point must in no way be trifled with, or the rash traveller will stand considerable chance of being literally made "dog's-meat" of. I have questioned many Fertit slaves, and they believe fully in the existence of this race, but place their whereabouts at nine or

ten days' journey to the south-west of their country. Of the Beni Temsah I have heard little, but should be sorry to visit their territory (which is said to lie somewhere in the interior), lest I should meet with a crocodile embrace and a crocodile lamentation for my fate. The saying, by the way, of "crocodile's tears" is nearly as common among the Arabs of the White Nile as with us, at least the origin of it; for they positively assert that the beast, having drowned its victim, tucks him under its arm, and carries him off to some lonely sandbank, where, previous to eating him, it sheds many tears of sorrow.

Though the digression from one sort of lion to the other may be somewhat unpardonable, yet I think that, having committed the fault, I may just as well go on with it. There is no tribe in this part of Africa, indeed 'scarcely an individual, but believes in the existence of a race of men with tails. For my own part, I have heard so much of them that I can scarcely help fancying that there must be some fundamental reason for such very general belief. Some of the Abyssinians have declared that, among the people whom we have called Barea, or Bâza, there is a tribe or district called Jirâtan, the people of which have tails, and are cannibals; they are said to lie somewhere north of the Barea; but here again the wonder-hunter would be nonplussed, for the people of Tâka and that neighbourhood (which would be in the direction indicated)—though all believe in the existence of such a race under another name—some declare that they are south of the Bâza, or near to Abyssinia, and others that they are in the centre of Africa. This latter locality appears, indeed, to be the receptacle of all these *lusi naturæ*. A man whom I met in Abyssinia amused me much with some of his ideas on these subjects: he was one of the handsomest blacks I ever saw, and had just arrived from Kordofan, on his way to the Galla tribes, as he said, but, in truth, I fancy on a voyage of speculation anywhere. He was a clever, imaginative fellow, and considered himself a learned man, being a "fàky," or priest. As is often the case, however, talent without much judgment and experience, and aided by

no education whatever, had led to superstition and credulity, and this good man was the most credulous fellow I ever met. Our first conversation showed me this, for, after some circumlocution, he led it on to the subject of alchemy, a topic little discussed among these southern nations, but believed in by the Turks and other Easterns, under the name of "*chimia*." He had, he said, much knowledge in the art of making gold and silver, and, persuaded that I must have many secrets, tried hard to induce me to go and settle with him, in order that by combining our knowledge we might ensure our fortunes. I begged him to believe that I was only a soldier, and knew nothing of such matters ; but I could see that the poor fellow was bitterly disappointed, persuaded that I had some valuable secrets which I was unwilling to reveal. I said that such things were disbelieved in India and Europe, where he had an idea that they were fully understood and practised, and I told him that if he went there he would be able to satisfy himself that such was the case. To this he replied that he should like to visit those countries (he believed them to be close together), but that he had heard how they treated strangers there. I asked him "How?" "Why," said he, "they hang them up by the legs, and then flog them with whips, and the sweat which falls from them under this treatment, being collected and cooled, becomes corrosive sublimate !!"

I endeavoured to find out something from him concerning my future route across Africa. He said that, having crossed Kordofan, I could enter Darfour safely, but that I should be stopped at Dar Saley, the next country, it being at war with Darfour ; that I might possibly pass by the south, through the slave tribes, but with difficulty, many of them being cannibals, among whom white meat was not only a novelty, but also was considered to have a fat, delicate look, which was very tempting. He told me that a brown man, a Mohammedan priest, who went there from his country, in the hope of converting the people to Islamism—though protected from actual danger by his sanctity—was, nevertheless, a very tempting object among them ; so much so, that whenever he

went out the little children came about him, poking him with their fingers in the ribs, feeling his arms and legs, and muttering to one another, "Wa-wa, wa-wa !" (meat, meat), with their mouths watering, and their features expressive of the greatest possible inclination to taste him.

To return to four-footed lions. I have nothing more to say about them, but that the killing one of them ranks as equal to killing twenty men in this country. Leopards (or panthers ?) are frequently to be met with in all parts of Abyssinia ; they are called *nebry* in the Tigrè language. The natives occasionally snare them in a rather artful manner. A rope with a running noose is tied to the bough of a tree, which is by main force drawn down towards the ground ; the rope is then fixed, by a contrivance so arranged that when the leopard attempts to seize the bait (usually a lamb) he is caught in the noose by the neck, and when he moves, setting the rope free at the ground, the bough springs up into its original position, and hangs him. I killed several, and preserved fourteen beautiful skins, some of very large size, but these were all destroyed with the unfortunate collection I sent to Aden. The black leopard is found mostly in the Galla countries ; his skin is worn by great chiefs in battle, being rare, expensive, and very beautiful. It is of the deepest chocolate brown, with spots of a darker colour, almost black. The ordinary leopard's is (as I have before said) worn out by the *Zacchári*. There is an animal, which I know not where to class, as no European has hitherto succeeded in obtaining a specimen of it ; it is supposed by the natives to be far more active, powerful, and dangerous than even the lion, and consequently held by them in the greatest possible dread. They call it "*wobbo*" or "*mantillit*," and some hold it in superstitious awe, looking upon it more in the light of an evil spirit with an animal's form than as a wild beast. Their descriptions of this animal are vague in the extreme : some say that its skin is partly that of a lion, but intermixed with that of the leopard and hyæna ; others, again, assert that its face is human, or very like it. It appears in the valleys, happily, only rarely ; for they say that

when it takes its abode near a village, it pays nightly visits, entering the very houses, and carrying off the children, and even occasionally grown-up persons. One had been killed some years ago on the river Werrey, and its skin presented to Oubi ; but I could never discover what became of it. I heard of a village which had suffered considerably from its depredations, and for several days watched every night in the neighbourhood, but without success.

The "nebry guolguol" is a pretty little animal, rather larger than a wild cat, and marked like a leopard, only that its spots are plain dark blotches, and not annular rosettes. There are two or three sorts of wild cats, which attain to a considerable size (they are mostly of a greyish colour), and one or two varieties of lynxes. The civet cat is, I should fancy, a native of this country, though rare, for I have never met with it, or even heard of it, wild ; but the neighbouring Galla tribes keep it for the sake of the musk (or civet), a large quantity of which passes annually on its way to the coast, and ultimately to Arabia, Egypt, and India. The scent is merely a secretion, which exudes at certain periods from between the legs of the animal ; it is scraped off and preserved, and fetches a high price at Massawa, a drinking-horn full costing from thirty to forty dollars. The merchants sometimes endeavour to smuggle in small quantities of this precious article, but seldom succeed, its powerful odour generally telling tales, even if the horn which contains it be concealed in a large cake of wax. I was surprised, when in Cairo, at finding it sold at even a less price than at Massawa ; but on investigation discovered that none leaves Jidda till it has doubled its bulk by adulteration with oil and other ingredients. There are several varieties of the canine species. First, as being the largest, is the misshapen, disgusting, "laughing hyæna," called in Tigre "zibby,"—in Amharic, "jib ;" he is to be found almost everywhere in the country, but, from his scavenger habits, chiefly in the most thickly peopled districts. He prowls about the streets of the villages, howling, laughing, and quarrelling with the dogs, with whom he disputes possession of the offal, and even enters

the yards and houses in quest of anything eatable, nor is he (if hungry) very choice in his selection of a supper : he will steal leathern bags and pièces of skins, such as are used for wearing or sleeping on ; I have frequently been disturbed by them in this manner, and it once occurred to me, as it has often to people whom I have known, to be awakened by one of them endeavouring to steal my leathern bed from under me. Luckily, they are as cowardly as they are big, strong, and ugly, for, had they only the pluck of a toy-terrier, there would be no living in a country so full of them. Nevertheless, they are said to attack children and weakly persons. They are supposed to be able to detect a faint and wearied wayfarer by the smell of his footsteps, and to follow him till, overcome by fatigue, he shall fall an easy prey, or till sleep shall give them an opportunity. They have even been known to attack persons asleep in their own houses. A living evidence of this is to be seen in the person of a young Mohammedan, now residing at Adoua, who was robbed one night of the scalp of one side of his head. The Abyssinians relate that in such cases (which are comparatively rare) the hyæna shows quite as much prudence as valour, for they assert positively that before attacking a healthy sleeper he will scratch him with his paw ; if the man sleep heavily (as is often the case in this country, to an almost wonderful degree), the beast will make one grab with his powerful jaws at his face or head, and be off ; whereas, if disturbed by the scratching, the sleeper should start up, he will turn tail at once, leaving behind most disagreeable evidences of a highly nervous temperament. He is dangerous among domestic animals, and frequently attacks donkeys or mules. Once I was sleeping on the White Nile ; we were a large party, and for fear of lions, &c., had tethered our animals in an open space, while we ourselves slept in a circle all round them with fires lighted. In the middle of the night we were disturbed by a great "kick up," and on rubbing our eyes, made the discovery that a hyæna had had the impudence to come into the midst of us, seize my favourite donkey by the rump, and drag him almost out of the circle of the camp. It would

appear that he had bitten harder than he meant, for he had torn out a piece of flesh as big as a man's fist.

Once, however, in Abyssinia, a case of "catching a Tartar," or "the biter bit," occurred between a hyæna and a donkey; for the latter with his teeth seized his aggressor by the neck, and, aided by terror, held him fast till he died. Next morning, when his master came, he found him shivering with fear, but still holding on to the hyæna's corpse; nor could his mouth be opened till they got a bar, and forced his jaws asunder. I was told this story by the son of the donkey's master; he positively assured me of the truth of the story, and moreover declared that from that time forth the donkey, which had formerly been much given to roaming, was perfectly cured of his erratic habits, nor could he be induced to pass the night even outside of the house.

Of the "tokla" (*canis venaticus*?) there are two sorts in Abyssinia. One is of a light tan colour, and tall and slight, almost like a small greyhound; at least so it has been described to me. Of the other kind, which is shorter and stouter built, I kept a tame specimen for some time; at least, as nearly domesticated as it seemed his nature was capable of, for at all times he was a wild, shy brute, and usually managed to inflict a deepish wound on the fingers of any imprudent stranger who ventured to caress him. Nevertheless, he was very cunning, and knew me well; would submit with a tolerably good grace when I patted him, and would come to my call: he was about ten months or a year old when I first got him. In appearance Tokla was more curious than beautiful; he had a little lean body, which no feeding could fatten, covered with a darkish brindly-spotted coat not unlike a hyæna's, and supported by legs as unlike those of any other animal as possible, being in colour white, with dark leopard spots, the hind legs remarkably long, and so doubled under him that when walking, or rather prowling about, it was doubtful if he touched the ground oftenest with his feet or *elbows*. His head was dark-coloured, short, and very broad and square about the muzzle, with small protruding black eyes, which seemed never to rest, a long forehead,

and the whole finished off with a pair of ears equal in length and broader than those of the finest hare that was ever coursed. These somewhat awkward appendages he always kept flat on his back when excited either by fear or anger, seeming to use them only as substitutes for his eyes when these were closed in sleep. To complete his description, he had a tricoloured tail, which was set on just like a hyæna's, hanging down loosely behind him, dark at the stump, then white, and the tip grey. To account for his perpetual thinness, it only requires to state his mode of feeding. He would take a huge piece of meat or offal, and put it into his stomach at once, seemingly entire, for he never appeared aware that his wonderfully muscular jaws and double row of teeth were at all available for mastication. Having thus bolted his dinner, his belly became distended till it nearly touched the ground, and then he would go and lie down for twenty-four hours or more, according to the quantity he had eaten ; after which he would return to be fed, as empty and starved-looking as ever. The Abyssinians say that these animals hunt in packs, and, though comparatively slow in their pace, succeed in bringing down their prey by perseveringly following its track for days and days. They even assert that neither the elephant nor buffalo is safe from their attacks ; that if they find one asleep they fall upon him in numbers, and seize fast hold on the tenderest parts of his belly : the animal, thus disagreeably roused from his slumbers, starts up and lashes about with the pain and fury. But nothing can dislodge his little persecutors, who hold on like leeches, till the victim, having worn himself out with passion and exertion, sinks exhausted. The former of these statements is, I doubt not, correct ; the latter probably founded on fact. I tried several experiments with Tokla in these matters, and from them formed my opinion. Once I remember being attracted into the yard by a bustling noise of animals running about, intermixed with my pet's shrill, squeaking voice. On going out nothing was apparent but a sheep lately bought for dinner, which, however was running about with every appearance of nervousness. Where was Tokla, whose voice I had

just heard uttering notes of unusual excitement? Lying quietly rolled up in a corner, shamming sleep, but peeping at me from the corner of one of his little wicked black eyes. I said nothing, but concealed myself in a shed, through the branches that formed the sides of which I could observe all that passed. For a short time the little brute lay motionless, in the same position as I had left him; after a-while, however, he got up stealthily, stretching himself as if just awake, but at the same time taking a furtive glance to see that all was quiet. Having satisfied himself on this point, he made a rush at the poor sheep, with his ears back and squeaking horribly. The sheep ran away when it could, only standing and butting at its little opponent when driven into a corner, and evidently in a desperate fright. Tokla seemed to heed little whether heels or horns met his advances, but kept on, now rushing furiously in, now dodging for a more favourable opening, incessantly for nearly half an hour. I doubt not, though scarcely six pounds weight, he would have ended by "*walking into the mutton*" of his adversary, had I not felt compassion for the poor sheep's mental sufferings, and disturbed my little friend in his pursuit. Indeed, I could not have allowed him to indulge his sporting propensities so long as he did, excepting as a study of his natural ideas, manners, and customs. The sheep, be it remembered, was not a fat unwieldy Leicester, but a great, bony, active brute, more like an exaggerated forester. In regard to this animal's powers of tenacity, a friend of mine, knowing that I was fond of pets, once brought me a young jackal, which he had knocked over with a stick or stone, the animal being at the time surfeited with an enormous dinner of locusts he had just eaten. From the helpless appearance he presented, I feared he was much hurt, and made him a comfortable bed of cotton wool in a corner, placing food and water by him. He remained all that day where he was, apparently in great suffering, and continued so for some time; but to my astonishment, rising early one morning, I found that he and Tokla had entered into an alliance most offensive to the fowls, one of which they had caught,

and were dragging about the yard—the one holding by a foot, the other by a wing. The moment I appeared, Cobero (the jackal) let go the fowl and limped back to his corner, a return of his sufferings having, it would appear, come on. Tokla, more determined, I had to beat off, which I did with great difficulty, and not until the poor fowl was so lacerated that I was constrained to kill it. Excited by its death struggles, he again laid hold, and this time I determined to see how long he would do so ; so I held up the fowl with him dangling to its wing till I was tired, and then swung him round and round, over and over, in hopes of his jaws tiring. But in this I was disappointed, for he held on till the wing breaking off threw him heavily on to his back to a distance of several yards. Even in his fall he was great, for he neither uttered a sound of pain, nor loosened his hold, but getting up stalked away quite proudly with the wing in his mouth. I was so much pleased with him that I gave him the body and all ; in this, perhaps, I acted wrong, for we afterwards found that if we didn't kill all the poultry he would, and so I gave up ever keeping any more. Poor little Tokla ! I grew very fond of him, for, though rough and ugly, he had such pretty, winning ways—he seemed always hungry, and would often bite people's legs, occasionally my own, not at all from vice, but sheer appetite.

There are three or four sorts of jackals in Abyssinia. The common grey one is found everywhere ; another is larger and of a bright chesnut and grey colour, while that of Simyen is yellow. Last of the canine species are three varieties of domestic dogs : one of these, the smallest, is not unlike the common town dogs all over the East, both in appearance and habits, though the dogs here, for the most part, have a sort of claim on some master ; the next is larger and well-built, something resembling a very powerful greyhound or deerhound ; this sort is not common, and is much esteemed. They are easily taught to hunt, and are frequently employed in catching grouse as well as four-footed game. M. d'Abbadie, on his return to Europe, brought one with him, which (if I remember right) he told me was a match for a wild boar.

I could easily believe it, for I never saw a more powerful, active-looking dog in my life. The third sort, if it be a distinct variety, I never heard of but in one family in Tigrè; it is as big as a mastiff, and very strong, though clumsily built. I had one given me, but he died at Khartoum a year after I left Abyssinia; he will be mentioned hereafter under the name of Maychal Bogo. The dog "couchant" in the sketch of my house at Adoua was intended as his portrait, while the one standing represented "Elfin," a little greyhound bitch, half English half Arab, and bred by Dr. Abbott, of Cairo.

Elephants and buffaloes are to be found, at certain seasons, in the valleys of the Mareb, Taccazy, and other rivers, and in the adjoining plains; they ascend and descend the streams according to the supply of grass and water. Both of these animals are so well known as to need little description of their habits. The Abyssinians, some centuries ago, are said to have used the elephant for riding and carrying loads, as now in India: this custom is, however, entirely abandoned. The buffalo is more dangerous than the elephant, which seldom attacks a man unprovoked, unless it be a single male separated from the herd; while travellers who have had the ill-luck to stumble on a herd of buffaloes have seldom escaped to tell the story. While I was at Rohabaita, two men, crossing the Mareb, came upon a herd; they were charged immediately; one, by good luck, got away among some bushes and ultimately escaped, and brought us news that his comrade was killed. We set off in search of the body, which we, with some difficulty, found in the jungle, bruised and broken to an almost undistinguishable mass by the horns and hoofs of the buffaloes, who had also licked great patches of his skin off.

The giraffe and rhinoceros are not common in Tigrè, though occasionally found in the plains to the northward. The skin of the former is used by the Arabs for shields, but I am not aware of any purpose to which it is applied in Abyssinia—probably on account of its rarity. I have seen it stated (I believe by Bruce) that the hair of its tail is used

for whips to drive away flies. This is quite true in Darfour and Kordofan, and may have been so formerly in Abyssinia ; but now in Tigrè, from the scarcity of the giraffe, horse-hair is more in vogue. The priests and gentlemen almost always carry a whip of this kind, mostly made of white horse-hair stained red with henna. I have mentioned that the horns of the rhinoceros are used for sword-hilts.

The hippopotamus is found in the Taccazy, but I believe nowhere else in Tigrè. The lake Tzana and other waters of the Amhàra country are plentifully stocked with this animal ; there is a tribe called "Commaunt" that subsists entirely on fish and the flesh of the hippopotamus ; the hide is used for making whips. The Abyssinians make their "harlingas" with a hippopotamus-hide stock, and a plain shred of leather for a thong ; while the "sote" or courbatch of the White Nile and Sennâr is a single piece of the solid skin, cut round and tapering to a point, so as to resemble our ordinary straight riding-whips.

There are two varieties of *Cynocephali*, or dog-faced baboons ; a small greenish-grey monkey, with a black face and white whiskers ; and the "goreyza." This last is, I should think, one of the most beautiful of the monkey tribe ; its back and head are covered with short, jet-black, glossy fur, while its sides and cheeks are furnished with silky hair of the purest white ; its tail is very long, and with a bush of white hair at the end ; this and the hair of the sides is several inches in length. The goreyza is to be found in some parts of Tsajaddy and Walkait, not (properly speaking) in Tigrè. I obtained several specimens, many very fine ones, which, however, were ruined at Aden. They frequent the high trees about churches, and on this account the people made some difficulty about their being killed ; they are very active, and, when springing from bough to bough, the silvery fringe of their sides flapping out gives them almost the appearance of being winged.

There are many varieties of antelopes : the largest is the "agazin" (koodoo?) ; it is nearly the size of a small cow, of a dun colour, with narrow white stripes down the sides, and

long spiral horns ; "tora" (hartebeeste ?), "waddemby" (gnu), "bohor," "callbadou," "medauqua" or "meyda," "sassha," "anshon," and several others. The "sassha" is found almost entirely on the rocky mountains ; it is of the size of a goat, with straight horns about four inches long, and its hair is of a greyish colour and resembles the quills of a hedgehog in stiffness.

I found two kinds of hares ; they are lighter coloured and smaller than the English one, and their ears are broader and longer ; in appearance they partake so much of the hare and rabbit that I should be at a loss to decide which of the two they really were. The cony, "ashkoko," abounds in the rocks of the northern "quollas." The porcupine, hedgehog, a sort of squirrel, the ichneumon, and most of the other varieties of the rat tribe usual in these latitudes, are to be met with. There is an animal called "saheyra," which I could not obtain, of which the Abyssinians have some curious ideas ; it lives in holes in the ground, and is said to feed on dead bodies, &c., coming out only at night. From one part of the description, that its hide is impenetrable to lance or bullet, I should judge it to be of the armadillo species.

The birds of these countries, though inferior in brilliancy of plumage to those of South America or Australia, and perhaps in song to our European warblers, are, nevertheless, probably as interesting as any to the ornithologist, from being in great variety, of striking character, and less known than those of the other quarters of the world. I collected above three hundred varieties, a good proportion of which I succeeded in bringing home with me. The ostrich and bustard are found to the north of Abyssinia and in the wilder districts of that country. I have four varieties of vulture ; the largest measures nearly eleven feet from tip to tip of his extended wings ; he is brown, except his thighs and the under feathers of his breast, which are white ; his neck and head are naked, except a sort of bristly beard under his chin. Another smaller sort has a white tuft on the head and neck. The others are the "secretary," and the "rakhamah," or white Egyptian vulture.

The eagles are very beautiful ; one, the largest, is all jet black, with the exception of his back, which is pure white ; another is rufous, or reddish brown, excepting his head, neck, and tail, which are white, and the upper feathers of



Female Abba Goumba.

his wings, which are of a dark chocolate-brown, almost black ; a third, smaller one, is all black, with a crest of feathers on his head. I have, in all, ten or twelve sorts of eagles. There are about twenty-four sorts of hawks and falcons, many of them very interesting ; four owls, a great

horned, lesser ditto, one resembling the common screech-owl, and a very small one, not larger than a small thrush. In my collection are a great number of storks, herons, ibises, cranes, and others of the grallatorial order, among which I might mention the *Balaniceps rex*, or king stork, an entirely new species, of which I have the only pair hitherto known in Europe; the royal crane (or crested), purple heron, sacred ibis, &c. &c. I have several kinds of plovers, six of grouse and partridge, the guinea-fowl, and florican; two very handsome geese, and five sorts of ducks. Of the hornbills I have already described the abba goumba; there are besides three other sorts, and the common hoopoe. There are ten or eleven sorts of cuckoo, one of which, the emerald cuckoo, though nearly the smallest, may be reckoned the most beautiful bird in this part of Africa, from the brilliant green of its back, contrasted with the bright canary yellow of its breast. The parrots and parroquets are few; I have only one sort of long-tailed green parroquet, a small grey, yellow, and green parrot, and the love-birds. I found three or four varieties of the night-jar, and as many of the woodpeckers, bee-eaters, fly-catchers, swallows, &c. &c. There is a great variety of pigeons and doves in Abyssinia and the neighbouring countries; of these the yellow-breasted pigeon is the most remarkable in plumage. The thrushes, sunbirds, kingfishers, rollers, and touracos are the most brilliantly coloured families of any. There are a great many sorts of thrushes; seven or eight sunbirds, which are the African species most resembling the humming-bird of South America; and six kingfishers, including the Great African. Besides these are a number of shrikes, barbets, finches, larks, &c. &c. I had forgotten the crow tribe, of which I have four sorts—one a large raven, with an enormously thick bill, and a white patch on his head, and another, a small bird, not much larger than a blackbird, with a long tail.

Reptiles of all sorts abound in the low, hot districts of Tigrè. The crocodile is plentiful in every brook or hole where there is water enough to conceal him. There are several varieties of the "iguano" or large lizard. The

Abyssinians will eat the flesh of neither of these, though the Arabs everywhere eat the lizard, and those on the White Nile do not by any means despise crocodile's flesh: I have tasted both, that of the former frequently; it is anything but disagreeable. Of the smaller lizards there are an innumerable quantity in all those countries; one sort, called by the Sennâris "dhabb," is much feared by both them and the people of Tigrè: they fancy that the poor little beast has the power of spitting some sort of venom which is very dangerous, and that it poisons any food, especially milk, which it may taste. I believe that all this is perfect slander, for, except that its appearance is unprepossessing, being covered with scales and other excrescences, I never saw anything in the poor "dhabb" but what caused me to become a great friend to him, and save him from much persecution whenever I was able. On one occasion the fear the Abyssinians have of him served to fill my hungry stomach better than I should otherwise have done. It happened that once, being on very short commons, I was seated at dinner next to a man who had a truly Abyssinian appetite and a still more Abyssinian facility for quickly despatching his food. Feeling that I should come in for a very small proportion of my share, I had recourse to a little stratagem to check his mastication. We had been talking of the "dhabb" (I forget his Tigrè name), and in the course of the conversation it was said, that, if he spat on a person, the poison was so powerful that the victim would feel ill at once, and die in twenty-four hours. This fiction was agreed to by several present, who, of course, all fancied that they had heard the same. After a few minutes I gave a start, and threw my club into a corner near us. "What's the matter?" I was asked—"Oh! nothing but an ugly little lizard, but he got away." Next, with a bit of grass, which I wetted in my mouth, I now and then touched the bare shoulders and back of my neighbour, who at the first time started, at the second looked round uncomfortably, and at the third time cursed the "dhabb's" family, lost his appetite, and declared he felt very ill. So I got my share, and more, and consoled my

neighbour afterwards with explaining the joke ; whereat he got very angry, and well laughed at by the rest of the party, one or two of whom had seen through the whole trick from the first, and assisted in playing it. There are many snakes, centipedes, and large venomous spiders of the tarantula kind in the hot, low districts. Among others, a species of boa constrictor is not uncommon. I have mentioned that one, reported of very large dimensions, was killed at Rohabaita some time before I went there. I myself saw two in the gully where the village wells are, and had a nearer view of them than was perhaps altogether safe. The grass and jungle being too high for much shooting, I went down one day to practise my rifle at a mark, and accordingly, having selected a part of the dry watercourse which, running nearly straight for above one hundred and fifty yards, appeared suitable for my purpose, I left one of the two servants who had accompanied me with my gun, while I and the other paced off the distance, and made a rough target of stones. Arrived at the proper place, we were engaged in collecting materials for our construction from the sides of the watercourse (which, as I have before said, was only a few feet wide, and with hills covered with rock and jungle rising abruptly from it on either side), when Tisphitou, the servant who was with me, started back, and pulled me with him, calling out "Temen, temen !" (snake). At the same moment I heard a loud rustling in the jungle, close to where we had been getting stones, and thinking, in my ignorance of the language (I had but just arrived at Rohabaita), that "temen" might mean lion, leopard, or antelope, called loudly to Gabrou to come up with the gun. All this passed in a moment's time ; and though only one hundred and fifty yards off, long before the gun arrived I had seen two magnificent boa constrictors, one about ten yards from the other, quietly leave their places, without attempting to molest us, and ascend the hill, till they were lost in jungle, whither I did not care to pursue them. The first thing I saw after the rustle was a head, which appeared for a moment above the canes, then a body, nearly as thick as my thigh, and then

they disappeared, the movement of the canes only marking the direction they had taken.

There is a great variety in the smaller sorts of snakes : the cerastes, or horned viper, asp, a species of cobra, the puff adder, and many others of all sizes and colours, from a pale pink to the brightest emerald green, are met with in Abyssinia and the adjacent countries. I was told of a horned serpent that was killed some years ago, which appears to have been a monstrosity, either in reality or the imagination of my informants. They described it as about seven feet long, nearly two feet in circumference, with scarcely any diminution towards the tail, and wearing a pair of horns three inches in length. It is commonly reported that dragons, or rather flying lizards of very venomous nature, are to be met with in Walkait. Scorpions are abundant everywhere in the hot districts; no house but is full of them. I have been stung several times by them, but without any serious consequences, though I have heard of many instances which have ended fatally.

As for fish and insects, there are plenty of the former in most of the rivers, and too many of the latter everywhere, but I know very little about them.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JOURNEY TO THE TACCAZY.

It would be very discourteous in me to leave my readers in such an out-of-the-way place as Adoua, else I might here bring my narrative to a close, for what remains will merely serve to show them the way into a rather more civilized district. Before entering upon the details of the long and very rough journey before us, I will just say a few words on what has already passed.

It must not be imagined that I was a fixture in the capital from the time of my return from Addy Abo till my final departure, although for convenience sake I may have allowed this to appear to have been the case. I made excursions into various of the provinces, and paid several visits of more or less duration to my old country friends as soon as the conclusion of the rains permitted me to move about. But I am not going to bore either myself or the reader with a journal of these excursions: I could at the best only tell of a few more quarrels with the inhabitants of the various villages I may have passed, or a few more kindnesses from them; of plenty here, and starvation there, &c. &c. As for the mode in which I spent my time in Adoua, it will be gleaned, from the notes on the manners and customs, that I was leading the life of an Abyssinian gentleman "about town," my hair well tressed, my pantaloons always of the newest, frequently of an original, cut; in dull weather setting fashions, disputing and deciding on the merits and demerits of shields and spears; in fine weather swelling about the town with a quarter of a pound of butter melting on my head, face, neck, and clothes, and with a tail

of half-a-dozen well got-up and equally greasy soldiers at my heels; doing the great man, with my garment well over my nose at every festival and funeral worth attending; "hanging out" extensively when I had a few shillings to spend; sponging on my neighbours when, as was oftener the case, I had nothing:—in fact, living a most agreeable life on a very limited income. I cannot deny that I look back to those times with a certain feeling of regret. It was the only period of my life in which I ever felt myself a really great man. I "cry very small" in England, with a much greater expenditure. The men will not look after me with admiration, nor the girls make songs about me here.

Meanwhile, as I have before hinted, I was living without any means; my supplies and letters having been unaccountably detained on the way, so that from the time of my leaving Cairo, two years and a quarter before, I was in the dark about Europe and European goings on.

However, near the end of May, 1845, I was one morning congratulated on the arrival, at Massawa, of a ship which I was told had brought me one or two large boxes. I had so often before been disappointed at such reports, having no less than three times sent messengers to the coast to bring up imaginary supplies, brought by imaginary vessels, and then, after ten days' or a fortnight's painful suspense, finding that I had to pay the couriers, and had not a farthing to receive, that I was inclined at first to disbelieve the report of my good fortune; but a coincidence settled the matter in my superstitious mind, and I sent again. This time report had not lied, for scarcely had my people left me three days when an Arabic letter from Houssein Effendi confirmed it. In due time the boxes themselves appeared, and I realized a pleasure in reading letters and newspapers which I had by no means expected, my ideas and feelings having become rather Abyssinian.

The rains were just setting in; still I felt that I must make up my mind for a start, or wait for another remittance; for, after my debts of honour, and the still more numerous

and equally imperative debts of gratitude, were discharged, the balance would barely carry me to Sennár, and would be insufficient if I remained a few months longer in Abyssinia. Accordingly I set about my preparations *instantly*. These are soon made when a man travels as I do, with next to nothing in the baggage department. Nevertheless I did not get away till late in June. I will spare myself the recollection, and my readers the perusal, of a very moist, unpleasant leave-taking: a crowd of both sexes came to see me off, although to avoid such an occurrence I had secretly fixed my departure for an early hour in the morning. Suffice it to say I was nearly wet through before I left my own doors. At last, off we were, and we reached successively Axum and Maitowáro without any occurrence save an attack of ophthalmia, which kept me a day in the latter village. Our road branched off from the Axum and Addy Àbo route, just after entering the plain of Solekhlekha. Three more days' ride, over a fertile and well-watered tableland, brought us to Devra Abbai (the great monastery), after passing the villages of Belliss, Addy Giddad, and Adega Sheikha. This part of our journey was somewhat devoid of interest: we had a few words at Belliss with a party of soldiers who stopped our porters, pretending that they wanted customs duty; but on my coming up the matter was soon set to rights, as the leader of the party happened to be an old acquaintance.

As for the scenery by the road, I heard say that it was tolerably monotonous, with the exception of occasional glimpses of distant mountains; but I saw nothing, for my eyes were bandaged from the effects of my late attack. About half-way across the plain we passed a ravine and stream called Gammalo, where may still be seen scattered bones of some of the fugitives from the great battle of Mai Islamai, the field of which is about two days' journey further on. This serves to show with what cruel determination the Gallas pursued and slaughtered their vanquished foes even to this distance. At Adega Sheikha we left the Gondar caravan route, which turns in a south-westerly direction,

while ours continued westward. We found the village of Devra Abbai built in a deep hollow or chasm, and so nearly concealed, that, when approaching it from some directions, you would scarcely imagine yourself to be near habitations, seeing nothing but a wide tract of table-land before you.

We were shown into a large oblong building, in shape and size much resembling an English barn, but here built of stones and mud, and thatched over; it was, I believe, intended for religious festivals, and occasionally for the reception of travellers. My three days' journey in the sun had been the means of bringing on a most violent return of ophthalmia, but, as some of my readers may not know what that complaint is, and I am sure I hope none of them ever will by experience, I may as well explain that it is a severe inflammation of the eyes, and, when it reaches the height it generally does in Africa, those useful organs are completely glued up, so that they cannot be opened till they have been bathed for a considerable time in warm water, and when they are opened, which is only done for the purpose of putting in some collyrium, nothing is distinguishable of what should be white, and blue, grey, or black, but a blood-red mass. It will be easily guessed, that to be laid up for a few days, or, as often happens, for weeks or months, stone blind, and with the agreeable sensation of having your eyes filled with sharp, coarse sand, red hot, is by no means an enviable situation. Well, this was my case at Devra Abbai for about ten days. The servants had made me a sort of tent inside the barn, more completely to secure for me the darkness I required, for, though the building was of very great area, and lighted only by a door at each end, it was a great deal too brilliant for me. While upon this subject I may as well say how I treated myself—who knows but it may be of use? I ate next to nothing, took plenty of jalap, &c., had some blood taken from behind the ears, and a few drops of solution of sulphate of zinc dropped into each eye three or four times a day. I believe this to be as good a recipe as any for ordinary cases: I have tried it often with success; but I must say that the dropping-in

part of the business is not agreeable. First the eye is opened as I have before described, and then it must be held open, for the faintest glimmer of light is unbearable, while an assistant drops in the collyrium by means of a bit of rolled paper or a small reed. I cannot make up my mind whether this operation or poking in bits of red-hot wire would be the more disagreeable, but should guess that the sensation would be nearly the same.

I remained a close prisoner till the day before we started, so that I had little time to make many inquiries or observations respecting the place. I walked about for a few hours only, and visited the church, which is built at the bottom of the hollow, the village rising like an amphitheatre from it ; behind the church is a large plot of grass, backed by a wood of considerable size ; a stream, forming in one place a natural cascade, ripples among the trees, which are the homes of many families of the small grey monkeys which were playing about them, apparently unconscious of the wickedness of Beni Adam, many of them sitting quite composedly on the nearest boughs, scratching themselves and looking at me. Several parroquets also fluttered about, seemingly with equal confidence. The sanctity of the place is their sure protection ; no one, not even the most profane, would dare to molest them in this holy retreat.

It would be as useless for any man, even the most graphic describer, to attempt to convey a just idea of tropical climate and scenery to a person who has never seen anything of the kind, as to describe music to a man born deaf, or colour to one who has never known the light. An initiated reader may, even from the little I have said, appreciate the exquisite beauty of the place. What I mean is, that a description of things so totally different from what we are accustomed to, as everything in those remote countries is, cannot help losing its African feeling and becoming Anglicized, first by an English description, secondly and mainly by passing through the English imagination of the reader. This is the least that can happen to the best of books. Amiable but rather impatient reader, I am not

digressing, for we are not on our journey, but seated in the most delightful shade that ever came to the relief of sore eyes ; we don't start till to-morrow,—to-morrow will soon be here.

Alas, poor Yakoub ! to-morrow came—another morrow saw him no more ! I have been selfish, in not having already mentioned a kind friend, though a servant, and one who nursed me tenderly during my blindness. My introduction to him was as follows :—A few days before our final departure from Adoua I was astonished at the sight of a strange white entering my yard. From a note of introduction which he brought me from Mr. Schimper he proved to be a German, who had just arrived in Abyssinia expecting great things, but who, finding that all was poverty, and that no money was to be made, was anxious, by any means, to leave the country, but had not wherewithal to pay his expenses to the coast. I spoke to him on the subject, and he told me that, having heard that Mr. Schimper was a prince, he had little idea that his principality only produced him a few dollars' worth of native cloths and some corn per annum. He had hoped to have obtained a situation with his countryman, and truly he was a man who would have been very useful to any one in those parts, for he seemed to have been of almost every trade, and to be able to turn his hand to anything. I never exactly knew what had brought him into such an outlandish country in search of a livelihood, nor do I remember whether I ever asked him his name ; he was many years older than myself, but, with the quiet steadiness of manhood, retained all the vigour of youth. In fact, he was everything that one could wish for as a servant or companion in such a country. I offered to assist him to return to Massawa, representing to him that the journey I was about to undertake would not perhaps be the most agreeable one, except for the novelty and adventure it might afford ; he accepted a small loan from me for present purposes, but declared that he should much prefer my route, and, as for roughing it, the more of that the merrier. He refused for the time any salary, as I was

taking him to do him a service, suggesting that when we arrived at Khartoum I should give him what I liked for the time that had passed, and that, if we suited each other, he should accompany me in the journey through Africa which I proposed undertaking. Thus much, coupled with his kind attendance on me when laid up at Devra Abbai, is all I know of his life; his melancholy and untimely death will follow almost immediately.

We started early, in order to effect our passage of the Taccazy as soon after noon as possible. Every moment was precious to us; the rains had already so much swollen the river that no one had attempted the upper ford (on the ordinary Gondar road) for several days past. We procured a guide, whose business was to assist us in crossing the torrents, and to show us the way over the wild, uninhabited district that lies between this part of the country and Walkait. He told us that we should perhaps have to retrace our steps, if we found the river too deep and strong for us; but that, as the ford to which he was about to conduct us was very broad, and consequently shallow, we might possibly get over.

Never did I feel in better spirits than that morning. We rode for some hours over a very wild picturesque country varied with table-lands, valleys, and hills of all shapes and sizes, passed near the scene of the battle of Mai Islamai, and about noon began the actual descent towards the river. For an hour or two we were buried in deep ravines, with rocks and trees overhanging us, till at length we emerged into a broad and woody flat, through the trees of which the reflection of the afternoon sun on its waters showed us the Taccazy, now swollen to a majestic river, at a distance of about half a mile. Most of our party set off at a run, eager to get a nearer view of it. I, for my part, had seen nothing like a river since I left the Nile; for the Mareb is, as I have said, but a rivulet in the dry season. Some of our people had never before seen a river of any sort, and looked upon it with awe and wonder. Indeed, it was a noble stream, in many places nearly, if not quite, as broad

as the Thames at Greenwich; but in its rapid, boisterous descent, more like the Rhone as it leaves the Lake of Geneva. On the opposite shore appeared a belt of forest similar to that we had just crossed, though neither so wide nor so flat, and in rear of this rose a dark mass of abrupt rocks. We ascended the stream for a considerable distance before we arrived at the ford where we were to cross. As the river did not appear so high as the guide had feared, he recommended a short halt before we entered the water; and, in the meanwhile, the baggage was made up into convenient parcels, and perishable articles packed in skins, so as to protect them as much as possible from a wetting. After sitting a few minutes we began to strip, and tie up our clothes in bundles, which we were to carry, each man his own, turban-like, on his head. I was proceeding very leisurely in my preparations, finishing a pipe, and waiting to be summoned, when I heard one of the Abyssinians call out, "Come back, come back!" A black who was with us answered him, "Oh, never fear, he's a child of the sea!" I looked up, and saw Yakoub wading out in about two feet of water, and occasionally taking a duck under as if to cool himself. Aware that he was ignorant of the language, I called to him, telling him that he had better not go alone, but wait till some one, acquainted with the peculiarities of the river, should guide him; he answered, laughing, that he was not going much farther, and that he could swim. I did not think there could be any danger if he remained where he was, the water not being more than a yard deep, and he had told me before that he was an extremely good swimmer; but the guides had cautioned me of the danger of the whirlpools, currents, and mud, which they said rendered it impossible for anything, even a fish, to live in some parts of the torrent; so when on looking up I saw him moving about, I again called to him, begging of him with much earnestness to return. He answered something that made me laugh, at the same time swinging his arms about like the sails of a windmill, so as to splash the water all round him. He might have been thirty yards from the shore, and a little

lower down the stream than where I sat. Still talking with him, I looked at what I was doing for a single instant, and then, raising my eyes, saw him as if trying to swim on his back; and beating the water with his hands, but in a manner so different from his former playful splashing, that, without knowing why, I called to him to ask what was the matter. He made no answer, but seemed as if moving a little down the stream for a yard or two, and then quicker and quicker. I was up in an instant, and ran down shouting to the people to help him, though at the same time I thought that he was playing us a trick to frighten us. A thick mass of canes and bushes, under the shade of which most of the servants had been sitting, overhung the river for several yards' distance, just below where I was. Having to pass behind these, I lost sight of him, and before I reached the other end of them the horrible death-howl of the Abyssinians warned me that he had sunk to rise no more. We ran along the shore for some miles, in the melancholy hope that perhaps the torrent might cast his body on to some bank, or that he might be caught by a stump or bough, many of which stuck up in the water, but it was an almost hopeless chance. The swiftest horse could not have equalled the pace of that fierce stream, and probably the body had been carried several miles before we had got over one. At times our attention would be attracted for a moment by a clot of white foam left on the mud, but at length we retraced our steps, sad, fatigued, torn to pieces by the mimosa-bushes through which we had forced our naked bodies, and having seen no signs of Yakoub since he sank. From the time I saw him, full of health and spirits, standing splashing the water in the bright sunshine, what a change had come over our whole party! Twenty seconds after, his death-wail was raised—

“ One moment, and the gush went forth
Of music-mingled laughter,—
The struggling splash and deathly shriek
Were there the instant after.”

And now that we were again on the spot, as if to make everything more gloomy, the sun was set, and scarcely a sound was to be heard but the dull moaning of that fatal river.

The guide, who had remained behind, or returned sooner than the rest, urged us to cross immediately, as the water had already risen several inches, and was still rising fast. So we entered two and two together, each pair of us connected by a couple of large poles laid across our shoulders, to which were tied portions of the baggage and some heavy stones. This last addition was a good precaution to give us greater weight to resist the stream; we edged upwards for some distance, and then, gradually crossing, arrived in safety on the opposite shore. It took us a long time to get over, and not one of us but acknowledged to having several times been very nearly carried off his legs. The water reached my breast in the deepest part, and consequently the chins of most of our people. We passed within a few yards of the very spot where I had seen poor Yakoub for the last time. In the morning we had looked forward to the crossing with the greatest pleasure, the risk attending it only appearing as a little spice to make it all the more agreeable. When we first saw the water, it seemed all bright from the sunshine and our own cheerfulness; when we crossed it, it was dark, chilly, and the grave of our comrade. The dangers were doubled by the rising of the river, and every spark of excitement or adventure had been quenched by the melancholy occurrences and fatigues of the day. I must say for the Abyssinians and blacks also, that on this occasion they manifested much sympathy and kindness of heart, appearing to feel as deeply for our poor friend's fate as if he had been a near and dear relation to them, although he had only been with us a few days, and except by signs and a few broken words, he could converse with none of the party. Moreover, not one of them for a moment hesitated, when his turn came, to enter the river, though none could swim except the guide and

three others. We never arrived at any satisfactory conclusion as to what could have been the cause of our loss. What could have produced the sudden change in his position which I first noticed? Everything was suggested; one thought a crocodile had taken him, and to sustain this argument it was said, by those who had seen him from the lower end of the bushes, that as he got into deeper water his head sank gradually down, till it disappeared in a deep pool nearly opposite to where they were standing, and that he struggled in the water, but did not appear to swim. This seemed probable, as, of course, if the animal kept at the bottom, his victim's head would gradually disappear as the water deepened. Others, again, said that an eddy had caught him, and that he had lost his presence of mind, and had not thought of swimming; and as to his sinking, that was accounted for by the fact of the hole in which he disappeared being (as it evidently was) a powerful whirlpool, which might have drawn him down into the mud. I leaned to the former of these opinions, though, certainly, the principal argument against it was that he never uttered a sound; while it was most probable that a man, feeling himself suddenly bitten, would call out if only from the shock. These melancholy thoughts and discussions occupied us for a time, as we prepared our resting-place on the western shore; but one of the people in gathering wood happening to light on a human skull reminded us that we were in the immediate neighbourhood of our old *friends* of Rohabaita, the Baréa. This little incident served to turn our thoughts into a more agreeable channel, for it led the guide into a series of interesting anecdotes relative to their former attacks on travellers in that immediate neighbourhood, and also on the convent of Devra Abbai, and some others in Waldabba. Two caravans had been waylaid during the past season on the hills just above us, and he judged that the vultures must have brought the skull thence. Thus for a time forgetting our sorrows, we were a little more cheerful. Having passed a hard day, and knowing that many such were before us, we tried to

rest, but, the conversation ceasing, nothing was to be heard but

“ The jackal’s cry—the distant moan
Of the hyæna, fierce and lone ;—
And that eternal, saddening sound
Of torrents in the glen beneath.”

I doubt if any of us slept soundly ; for my own part, I started up twice, once fancying that I heard the death-howl again, and once that poor Yakoub was calling me by name.

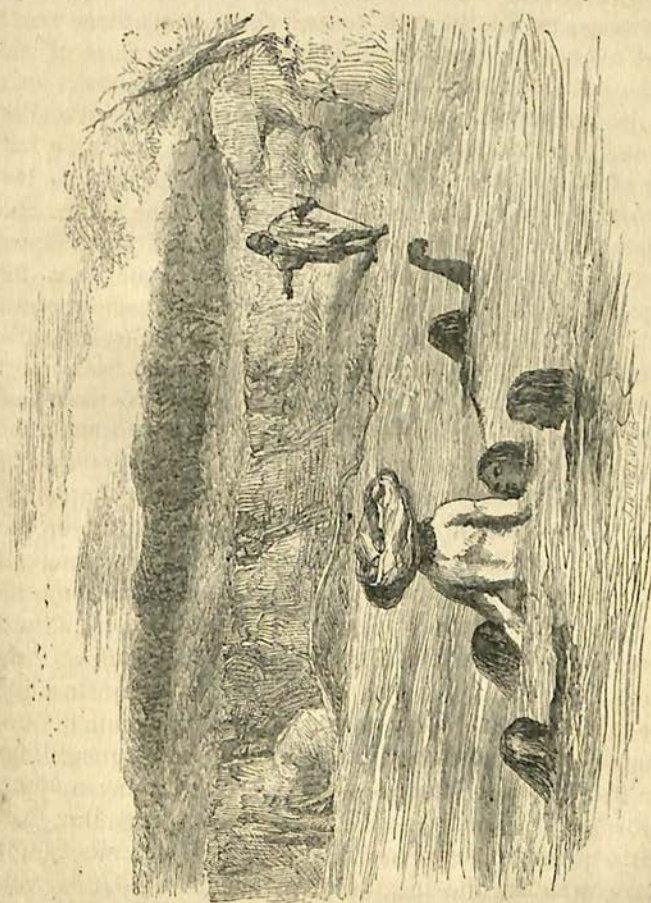
CHAPTER XXXIII.

JOURNEY TO CAFTA.

WE were now in Waldabba. Our next three days' journey lay along the frontiers of that province, in the uninhabited waste between it and the Barea country. We had frequent reminders of the neighbourhood of these savages in the shape of scattered bones of their victims; there was less danger of our being attacked by them at that season of the year than at any other time, as they would hardly be on the look-out for travellers in such wet weather. After crossing a wild table-land, in some places covered with mimosa forest, but without road or any other sign of humanity, we arrived on the third day at the Zarrima. This river we supposed would have offered us no impediment, but on reaching it we found that it was a deep rapid, with, in some places, nearly as much pretension to the title of cataract as the falls of the Nile in Upper Egypt; the guide, however, consoled us with the assurance that it would soon go down, and that perhaps by morning it would be little more than ankle-deep. But it did not go down; next morning it was a good deal increased, both in volume and rapidity. To cut a long story short, it kept increasing a yard and decreasing a foot for four days, during which time we were all but starved. We had had no idea of meeting with this delay, and, expecting to arrive at some village of Walkait in three or at most four days from the Taccazy, had provided ourselves with provisions sufficient for little more than that time. Queer stories were told of some of our party having eaten a horrid dead fish which they found, and of others making little excursions into the interior,

professedly for the sake of collecting fuel, but in truth to get hold of and eat raw any newt, lizard, snake, or other reptile they might chance to meet with. Some of these stories were not altogether romances. We had only a very few dried vetches each for food, and were miserably off in other respects, for the rain poured down on us three hours out of every four, and the neighbourhood was bare of old wood, the vegetation being mostly of small shrubs; such fuel as we could procure was moreover so thoroughly saturated that we were scarcely ever able to get up a fire. Four days of this sort of life being enough for us, we determined to try and swim the river. The guide and another of our party plunged in some hundred yards above where they meant to land, and arrived in safety on the other shore. They had chosen a comparatively smooth reach, and still were carried down stream a very long distance, though the torrent itself could not have been more than fifteen to twenty yards wide. The guide, who had taken an inflated goat-skin to support him, returned, but the other man remained where he was, as he was not a very good swimmer, and had had much difficulty in getting across. The bed of the river is in a deep crack in the plain, seemingly, the work of some convulsion of nature, and the torrent in consequence, having no means of passing the high rocks which wall it in on either side, rises rapidly to a great height every time a flush of rain comes down from the hills. On the guide's return he set about constructing a sort of raft, by which means I and the other non-swimmers were to cross. I watched his proceedings naturally with some interest, and, in a very few minutes, when it was finished, exclaimed, "And is this the bark which is to carry Cæsar and his fortunes?" It was simply a faggot of sticks, the biggest scarce half as thick as your wrist, most of them green, and all saturated with water, in fact, barring the last two qualifications, just such a bundle as an old woman would carry under her arm from a hedge-bottom. I tried its buoyancy in a corner of backwater, and laughed heartily at its maker on finding that it could

not even float itself, much less carry me ; but he explained that the faggot was only the horse I was to bestride, at the same time pointing out to me the afore-mentioned goat-skin bag, into which he was packing my watch and other



Crossing a Torrent.

small and perishable articles, as the floating power which was to sustain me. This being the case, I suggested, on seeing him stuff in a few small articles of clothing, that the more room he left for air the better ; but he answered that

he filled it pretty well with solid articles in order to give it more power to resist the pressure of the water, which might otherwise make it bulge about and so render my seat rather unsteady. Having packed it, he proceeded to blow it full, and secured the mouth with a string; it was next tied to one end of the faggot, and the whole machine placed on the edge of a rock, the top of which was about nine inches under water. Two lads, who could not swim, and yet volunteered to accompany me, got down and held it, one on each side; I mounted straddle-legs, with the bag in front of me, the guide holding by a rope which was to lead us: he would not put the rope round his shoulder, as is customary, lest, as he afterwards explained, we, coming to grief, should drag him with us. The other two swimmers followed behind to give us an occasional push when necessary. In this order of procession we dropped into the stream, and away we went. I can convey no better idea of the pace at which we were carried down the moment we got into the current than by mentioning that I felt exactly the same sharp thrill up my back that one does when coming downwards from a considerable height in a swing, and that an instant after our launch, turning round to answer to the cheers of the men whom we had left behind, I saw them running, but at two or three hundred yards' distance. In a few seconds we passed the man who had first swum across, and was awaiting our arrival at the spot where we had expected to land. He shouted to us to strike out manfully for the shore, as there was a "farra-seynia" (horseman, meaning whirlpool) just below. The guide had hitherto seemed to have forgotten to swim, but now he put his back to it, and, aided by the other men, tumbled us somehow or other on to a stump of a tree, from which with some difficulty we were hauled ashore. As for our passage, narrow as the torrent was, we must have been carried nearer half a mile than a quarter before we got across it. My chief ground of fear was lest one of my *hangers-on* should be flurried and upset me, but truly they behaved very well; a joking word, with a lift by the nose,

chin, or hair, when I saw either of them getting lower in the water or nervous, kept up their spirits, and they landed as fresh and frisky as possible.

My horse, aided by the two mules, had to swim over with the best part of the baggage. After resting a short time the guide and two others recrossed with his floating bag, and drove the animals into the water. They were turned in with the packs tied on to their saddles, and a man to each of them; the stream soon carried them into the middle of the channel, and we who had crossed first were stationed at intervals on the shore to encourage them in their efforts to land on our side. One of the mules made a mess of it, floundering about so as nearly to drown the man who was with her, and ended by getting rid of her burden; she had a narrow escape, for she was carried down into some very rough water, and landed with difficulty a considerable way off. Both of the mules had to be drawn out of the water by sheer strength, and then they lay on the ground panting from fright and fatigue for some moments; the horse, on the contrary, only required to be helped up the bank, and, when relieved of his burden, he shook himself, and began to feed as quietly as if in a stable. The porters and one or two of our people refused to cross, preferring to make their way as well as they might up the stream till they arrived at some village of Waldabba. I never heard of them afterwards, but should fear that they must have had a rough journey, as they were entirely destitute of provision of any kind, and would have to trust to fish or wild vegetables for subsistence: they had little or no chance of obtaining the former; of the latter not much more.

After bidding them adieu, drying our property in the sun, and resting, we packed our baggage on the animals and set off on foot for Amba Abraham. It was a rough walk over stones and through a wooded, thorny country, and when we reached the foot of the conical hill on which the village is built we were all so completely knocked up from hunger, thirst, fatigue, and such-like little incidents, not uncommon to African travel, that none of us felt disposed to ascend it,

so we lay down under a tree and awaited the arrival of some of the country people. Most of the frontier villages in this neighbourhood are constructed on high places, somewhat difficult of access, and some are further protected by a surrounding wall; these precautions are taken to prevent the inhabitants from being surprised by the rather too warm visits of their neighbours the Barea.

It was near sunset when we arrived, and, shortly after, a peasant with a flock of goats passed us on his way homeward. Seeing that we were half-starved, he endeavoured to drive a very hard bargain with us, but at last we induced him to sell us a little milk and an old he-goat for twice its value. If any one of my readers is fond of savoury dishes, in the shape of high game, &c., and wants a change, let him go to the goats and select a fine old patriarch, father of the flock, choose the one that has the longest horns, wears the finest beard, stamps most with his fore-feet, snorts loudest, and bleats gruffest; let him take him, and, having killed and flayed him, lay him on the embers for a few minutes till he is about warmed through, and then eat him all but raw, as we did from sheer hunger. Let him do this, and, if he don't find flavour enough for any one, he may say that I don't know what's good; and, if he get the taste out of his mouth for a week, I should feel obliged to him for the name and address of his tooth-brush maker. After our rather too savoury meal we ascended and slept in the village. Next morning we resumed our road; but here again I must remind the reader that, though I frequently use the word "road," in most cases it merely means our direction, route, or journey, for there are no roads at all in Abyssinia, only here and there in the populous and most frequented districts are traces like sheep-paths, where a succession of passers have worn away the herbage, while on many routes, such as that I am now describing, three or four days may pass without your meeting with any sign to show that human beings have ever travelled that way before you.

From Amba Abraham we descended the hill through a rough mass of stones and thorny bushes, which tumbled

us over and tore our clothes at every step. My horse, which was walking alone, performed a complete summerset, tumbling head over heels (or rather *vice versâ*) from the top of a small rock into a mass of bushes below, with no worse misfortune, however, than the breakage of his saddle. My mule also rolled, rider and all, down a bank, but we got up again all the better for it.

We had been led to expect that, on reaching the plain, we should find a track which the people of the last village said would guide us for some distance on our way. After some search we came upon it, but it was so faint and so *varicose* that we several times lost it before reaching the Quollima, a rivulet (now almost a river) distant some four or five miles from the village we had left. We found it to be about knee-deep, and the stream very strong. Three or four miles farther we came to Denderàqua, a streamlet which with the last joins the Zarrima before reaching the Taccazy. Here I rested under the shade of some trees, in one of the most picturesque spots I ever saw. Some of our people who had been loitering behind came up with us at this place, and brought me a leather pouch that I usually carried on my saddle-bow, and which they had found on the ground where my mule had rolled with me; its former contents, my note-book, pipe, and tobacco, were, however, not with it, so I sent two men back again to look for them. This was my second loss of the same nature, though it was of slight importance, for the book only contained a few sketches and my journal from Adoua. My great loss was in the Zarrima. Delayed by this circumstance, and anxious to give the messengers a chance of overtaking us, we halted for the night on the Monkey's stream (Mai Wàag), distant not more than a mile from the last. The whole of the next day was spent in wandering about, none of us having any idea of the direction we ought to follow. We passed the night on a small brook, called Waiva. It was a pretty rivulet, and the clean sand which edged it tempted us to lie down close to the water. We slept deliciously; it was the most comfortable couch I had lain on for many a night. But some envious

god or goddess, looking on our position as too snug, compared with his or her damp bed on a cloud, mischievously dropped some wet on the hills, which so swelled the rivulet that I awoke a little after midnight fancying that it was very cold, and found that we were all lying in six inches of water. Some of the party got up about the same moment, but, such is the wonderful tenacity with which Morpheus holds the eyelids of many niggers, that we had the greatest difficulty in making one or two of the others budge, and, when by dint of kicking and shouting we got them to rise, it was only to stagger away a few paces, and then, all wet as they were, they tumbled down and, rolling themselves up, went to sleep again more soundly than before. Making the best of an uncomfortable business, the rest of us soon followed their example. Next day, after a few more wanderings, we came on to the track made by the passage of Lemma's troops the previous year, and still visible in places; after following its direction for some time it led us to a more beaten path, used by the peasantry of the country when going to their mazzagas, that is, the low flats of dark soil which the people cultivate, though they live on the neighbouring hills, the mazzagas at certain seasons of the year being very unhealthy. All our journey from Amba Abraham lay across these plains. In places the country was well wooded with mimosas and other trees, and, whenever we passed at all near the inhabited hills, we saw great plenty of cotton and other crops. These plains are abundantly watered, numerous streams crossing them on their way to the Taccazy.

After continuing our new road for a few miles we entered a dense forest of mimosas, which shaded us throughout the remainder of the day; at night we camped near the brook Minminai. At this season of the year the whole country is well moistened by the rains, and the low plains, such as the mazzaga we were crossing, are deep in mud, which is highly disagreeable to a barefooted pedestrian, the moisture softening the skin and making it more penetrable by thorns. The reader will say that this fact might have been

left to his imagination, as being self-evident, but will perhaps ask, "How did you manage to sleep on the sloppy bosom of a bog, such as this must have been?" This was quite simple. Excepting on the occasion when, tempted by the sand of the Waiva, we got hydropathic treatment gratis, we every night made ourselves mattresses of pieces of wood, large stones, &c., which we collected and laid together till of sufficient height to keep us well out of the mud and wet. A tanned hide spread upon this formed our bed, and, when it came on to rain, our covering also. Now this may appear an uncomfortable sort of couch; and indeed it is not altogether luxurious until you are used to it. It requires a little knack, and some turning round and round like a dog, to adapt the risings and hollows of your body to those of your bed. A man would not sleep well if he rested his hip-bone on the apex of a conical pebble, but with patience, a little management, and a hard day's work, a good night's rest is not a difficult thing to obtain under any circumstances. I trust I shall not be deemed effeminate if I suggest that a few green boughs, if such can be obtained reasonably dry and tolerably free from thorns, may, with advantage, be added as substitute for a feather-bed. In this journey, however, we seldom obtained such luxuries. My dog, "Maychál Boggo," did not like rain, so, when a heavy shower fell during the night—my readers must remember that tropical rains are by no means like a Scotch mist—he would come to me, and, without any ceremony or whining, make a determined attempt to work himself under my covering. Maychál, though a good and faithful beast, was rather large for a bedfellow, being as big as a Newfoundland, and withal his hair was of that longish, thick, coarse description, which is peculiar to some of the mastiff breeds, and which, especially when well wetted, is considerably odorous. A day's tramp through the mud did not generally make him cleaner, nor was he able to be very choice in his diet, so, when he attempted to force himself into my society, I would say, "Maychál Boggo, so far as board goes, you shall share with me the last crumb, but really my bed is but

just large enough to contain me alone." But he would not listen to reason—answering to my polite speech only by seizing the corner of my leather with his teeth, and tugging away at it in the most systematic manner, till, after getting a few quarts of rain into my bed, I was obliged to make the best of a bad job and let him in, endeavouring at the same time to leave him the outside place, for the skin which was wrapped round me, half over and half under, was not broad. He, however, was selfish, I fear, for he would not be satisfied until he had got into the fold, leaving me in the worst place, and growling and snarling at me if I attempted to resist. His pertinacity was too amusing to allow me to get angry, and I was in general too sleepy to have troubled myself about the matter if he would but have kept still when he was there. But no such luck—if a hyæna or other animal chose to approach our camp fifty times during the night, each time my dog would start up, and, planting his great paws on to my eyes, nose, mouth, or any part of my body which happened to lie in his direction, bark himself into a fury for a few seconds, and then dash off in pursuit, dragging off my covering, and leaving me "*puris naturalibus*," at the mercy of the storm. Often did I vow that he should disturb me no more, and as often would he return wet and reeking from his expedition, sometimes with bleeding marks of the hyæna's teeth, and serve me as before. This is a sample of the way we passed our nights.

Towards noon of the day following we began gradually to ascend from the mazzaga on to the inhabited table-land of Walkait; on our way we passed some small villages, the inhabitants of which were in a delightful state of primitive simplicity, whole populations turning out to see a white man for the first time in their lives, and willingly exchanging any little necessities we required for a few needles or glass beads. Towards three or four o'clock we began climbing the hill on which the village of Quollita stands. It was a splendid wild ascent. In some places the rocky hill-side was covered with shrubs, in others we passed along narrow ledges overhanging

deep and woody ravines; above us rose the mountain, and below, at a great distance, was spread the broad flat of the mazzaga. Arrived on the summit, what a magnificent view awaited us! The whole of my route from Maitowaro lay before me like a panorama. The hills of Addáro were visible in the distance, bearing a little north of east, and forming the boundary of the vast tract of country which lay between us, and which, from our elevation and distance, appeared a perfect plain, the valley of the Taccazy winding through it, and the mountain of Amba Abraham appeared quite close to us. The two servants whom I had sent back for my lost note-book had, after a fruitless search, arrived before us by a different route: we found them on the top of the hill looking out for us; they had prepared a lodging in the village, where we were well received and comfortably housed for the night. Our next day's road was over a very different kind of country from that of the previous days—a hilly and moderately well populated district: we passed four villages, the last of which, Sola, is, like Quollita, of considerable size. A few miles from this place brought us to Cafta, the frontier town of this part of Abyssinia, and the market to which the Arabs from some of the Sennári provinces resort. It happened to be market-day, and arriving early in the afternoon, I strolled about while my people sought for lodgings. I attracted much attention, being quite a novelty. By most people I was voted a spy; by all I was pronounced a Turk, for, as in Tigrè they know all whites by the name of Copts, so here we are all of the family of Othmán. I met several Arabs, whose costume was precisely that of all the Nubian Bedouins; they had brought a quantity of salt from the neighbourhood of Souàkim, and were purchasing slaves and other articles of Abyssinian export. The market was crowded; the principal goods offered for sale seemed to be country cotton stuffs, horses, and slaves. The horses and slaves appeared to me to be of very inferior quality, the former fetching from three to nine dollars (12s. 6d. to 17s. 6d.), and the latter very low prices compared with what I had seen at Massàwa and even Adoua. The cloths

of Walkait are well known all over the country; they are not quite so much esteemed as those of other parts of Tigrè, but are manufactured in great quantity, and are sold very cheap. My reputation of being a Turk had the effect of obtaining a direct refusal of lodging wherever we applied for it; and notwithstanding all my assertions to the contrary, and the use of every means of persuasion I could command, it was not till late that I got leave from a very poor man to occupy a wretched hovel adjoining his habitation. Here I determined on a quiet halt for a few days, as I and most of my servants had been more or less ailing ever since our supper at Amba Abraham, the old he-goat we had eaten there never having been at all disposed to rest easy in our stomachs. I was not long left in peace, for the third night I was awakened by a noise, and found my hovel full of soldiers, who, with a good deal of rough language, informed me that I was their prisoner. It was a party from the camp of Lidge Hailo, governor of the frontier, and one of Dejatch Guangwoul's principal men. I was wrong in saying that they were rough, for it was only their leader Belladta Wassan, an ugly old brute, who began to bully and bluster as soon as he got in. Ill and weak as I was, they carried me off, through a pouring rain, to the camp, more than a mile distant. Here I was introduced to Lidge Hailo, who assumed the tone and manners of a judge. Being ill I was rather cross, and it ended in my being consigned to a squad of soldiers, with orders that I was not to leave their hut on any pretext, nor to have access to my baggage, over which a guard was placed, nor to be allowed any communication with my servants. I could obtain nothing from the chief in explanation of the motive of all this rigour, except that such were his orders. So I was led off to my prison; it was a very comfortable, good-sized hut, and the chief had the propriety to direct that a stretcher and piece of hide should be furnished me for a bed. I soon slept off my troubles, notwithstanding the noise made by my companions or guards. Next day I awoke quite in my usual state of philosophy, and highly amused at my situation. The soldiers

collected in numbers to look at me, and tried at first to divert themselves at my expense. After some little "*chaffing*," of which I took no notice, they began to dance about, going through their *doumfâter* or war-boast,* and coming up to me, slipping their lances at me, and catching them by the butt when the point was within an inch or two of my body. I knew very well that I was in no danger if I only kept my temper, so, when the first man had performed his part, I took a piece of straw and gave it to him, telling him that it was a sword which I saw he needed; this raised a laugh against him, and, entering into the spirit of the thing, we went on famously. I acted the part of chief, and gave to one man a straw coronet, to another a similarly constructed bitoa or bracelet, to a third an imaginary mule, and so on, till unheard-of wealth was conferred on these poor fellows in aërial governments and herbaceous jewellery, while, to make the matter appear more real (as Mr. Swiveller remarked to the Marchioness), I invested a dollar (which I luckily had tied up in the corner of my belt) in some tedge, and, each man bringing his share of dinner, we had a great ceremonious feast, with all the proper attendants, even to the waiter, who held up long strips of spongy teff-cake to be cut and eaten with the sword, in representation of raw beef.

Thus we passed a whole afternoon in a most agreeable manner, and by a little good temper and management I became a great favourite with the soldiery, instead of being

* I have alluded to this *doumfâter* once or twice, as similar to the Red Indian custom of "counting their coups." After a battle, and on certain other great festivals, the soldiers come before their chief, dressed in all the finery of lion's skins and silver mounted shields, &c., they possess. Each in turn steps forward, and swaggering about in front of his master, shaking his shield and brandishing his lance, screams out at intervals, "I am your soldier!"—"Soldier of the owner of the Grey Horse" (or whatever the chief's war-cry may be)—"Son of Mr. So and So—I have killed Barea!"—"I have killed two at such a battle!"—"Two more at such a battle!"—"I have killed Gallas!" &c. &c. &c.—the audience muttering "It is true!" occasionally. It is a very wild, picturesque scene. Each warrior concludes by throwing down any trophies he may have taken, and bowing low before the chief, who usually gives him a present according to his deserts.

bullied by them, as I should certainly have been had I conducted myself otherwise. Let this be a warning to hot-headed travellers. My greatest discomfort arose from my complaint, which had increased probably from good living at Cafta, and the nature of which rendered my confinement to the hut highly irksome. But this only served to draw out the good qualities of my comrades, who contrived for me all sorts of little necessary conveniences, and went about in search of medicines. They procured me some pungent root or other, which seemed to do me a great deal of good, so much so, that on the third day of my imprisonment I was quite well. About the same period one of my servants, who, though under surveillance, were allowed their freedom, left Cafta secretly during the night and went straight off to Dejatch Guangwoul, whose camp was about two days' journey distant, and represented me as a friend of Dejatch Oubi's sent by him to Sennár to procure him some guns. There was some demur about whether this lie was to be believed, and whether I ought not to be kept till the cessation of the rains should allow a messenger to cross the Tac-cazy and inquire of Oubi. Luckily for me, one of Guangwoul's attendants had seen me frequently in company and intimate with his master's brother, Dejatch Shétou. This was told to the young prince, and it was also argued that Oubi, being determined on a war expedition immediately the dry season set in, would be angry with them, if by detaining me they should prevent the guns arriving in time; it happily ended in my servant being sent back and with him a soldier who bore a message to Lidge Hailo to liberate me instantly, treat me with the greatest possible kindness, and forward me on my way to the best of his power. These orders were obeyed to the letter. I really believe that Hailo is an excellent fellow, though his counsellor Wassan is a brute that deserves flaying. Hailo invited me at once to sup with him, and treated me with the utmost familiarity, seating me by him and pressing me to drink largely with him. As a mark of especial esteem he gave me a small stick, the end of which was crooked and cut into teeth like

a comb, the use for which it was intended being to scratch one's own back. I never made out the exact motive of my detention, but suspect I may have been taken for one of the Greek silversmiths. After I had left him and returned to my old quarters at Casta, he sent me a bountiful supply of food for my supper, and an *azmàry* or buffoon to cheer my evening. Next day a second supply was brought me, and a singing woman, of considerable talent accompanied it. I was by this time quite a lion, no longer a Turk, but a friend of the chiefs, and a most cultivable acquaintance; so I was visited by crowds of people all congratulating me on my liberation, and many bringing me presents of eatables. Very different this from the reception they gave me on my first arrival. I was entreated to remain through the rains, and then, if I must go, to take the way of Gondár, the route I had chosen being represented as full of dangers, partly from fever, and partly from the hatred that Nimr's people have for a Turk. But the main object I had in undertaking this journey was to visit this same Nimr, the celebrated Jàly chieftain, who, having killed Ismael Pacha, Mohammed Ali's son, had fled from his home at Shendy on the Nile, and settled, with a number of his own tribe and other refugees of all breeds and colours, on the neutral ground between the Egyptian provinces of Nubia and Abyssinia Proper. So, the second day after my liberation, I started on my way, reached his abode in safety, remained with him some time, and then passed to Soufi, on the other side of the river Atbara, the geographical frontier of Abyssinia. I was pleased to hear from Sir Samuel Baker, the only European beside myself who has visited them, that I and my dog Maychál Boggo were still kindly remembered by the hospitable outlaws. The subject of the present volume being limited to Abyssinia and the Abyssiniáns, I shall say no more of them, nor of the four years I passed in Nubia, Sennár, and Kordofan, on the White Nile, with the desert Bedouins and in Egypt, except that, in the words of "our mutual friend" Mr. Samuel Pickwick, "I shall never regret having devoted the greater part of *nine* years to mixing with

different varieties and shades of human character, frivolous as my pursuit of novelty may have appeared to many
* * * * * Numerous scenes of which I had no previous conception have dawned upon me, I hope to the enlargement of my mind and the improvement of my understanding. If I have done but little good, I trust I have done less harm, and that none of my adventures will be other than a source of amusing and pleasant recollections to me in the decline of life. God bless you all!"

THE END.

Map of part of
ABYSSINIA AND NUBIA.

to illustrate the journey of
MASSFIELD PARKYN, ESQ.
thence to the Indian and Chinese seas and other
between the mountains of
Peret & Gassert, Rappa & Lake Rannagay, &c.

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